THE
AWAKENING

by
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and
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TITLES RUN over a series of close-ups. They are intercut between preparations for a ritual in a darkened room, and a woman standing at the front door of a London townhouse, nervous, preparing herself.

Ext. A woman's eye is closed. FLORENCE CATHCART is refusing to see. Her long lashes betray nerves. She is outside in daylight.

Int. An elderly woman with a veil across her face nods as if in silent recitation: we can barely make out her heavy features. An elderly CHINESE MAN does the same.

Ext. Florence's fingers grasp a photograph - the subject of which isn't clear. Her hand grips the brass knob of the heavy door, knuckles white as if she is steadying herself. Her face, although blessed with natural beauty, carries deep shadows.

Int. Opium is cut from a ball with a sharp knife. Smoke licks the dark air of a room. The lips of a middle aged woman (MRS VANDERMEER) tremble; her hands clasp a lock of blonde hair. Her eye too is alert, frightened. Another pair of hands holds a woman's necklace. Another clutches a silk handkerchief.

Ext. The head of the dead fox round Florence's shoulders rises and falls with her heavy breathes, as if breathing itself.

Int. The sinister ritual is being prepared by a middle aged man and woman - ALBERT & VERA FLOOD: a colourful song bird is taken from a cage, stroked, then executed and bled into a bowl.

Int. An opium pipe is packed and lit. On the richly decorated walls are sexual Eastern art and details of *Hieronymus Bosch's* "Garden of Earthly Delights" and "Last Judgement".

Ext. Florence's eyes are open now. Nervous.

Int. The Chinese man and veiled woman continue their silent recitation. From behind, Vera Flood's fingers loosen the collars of each person present, she strokes their necks and presses her palms against their chests. When it is the turn of Mrs Vandermeer, she welcomes it. Vera's worn hands contrast against her pale skin.

Int. The song bird's body is placed on the table to one side beside a glass jar containing the foetus of a cat in formalin.

1 EXT. DEVONSHIRE STREET - DAY 1

The door that Florence has been clinging to is opened by a male servant. Florence's eyes are drawn at once to a tiny pale woman - VERA - standing deep inside the hall.

VERA
Miss Emerson?
Are you prepared?

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FLORENCE
(fumbling for photo)
I, I have this.

VERA
That's not what I mean dear, I mean are you 'prepared'?

Florence nods, steps inside and the door closes behind her.

CAPTION: LONDON 1921

2 INT. VERA FLOOD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 2

The 'guests' are seated round the circular side of a rough, semi-circular table. Drawn in chalk on the table in front of each person is a strange symbol, redolent of a pentangle. At the centre of each symbol small candles burn, stuck to the wood with melted wax. Mr and Mrs Vandermeer, a fragile wife with her supportive husband, are struggling to stay clam. So is a burly, military-moustached man in uniform, CAPTAIN MILLS, who holds a woman's handkerchief in his hand.

A skylight above them is covered in dead leaves; dim light runs down the assembled faces. We now see the photograph Florence has brought - a sepia portrait of a young army captain.

Beside Florence is a young bank clerk, EVANS, owner of the woman's necklace. The old Chinese man is still muttering.

At a nod from the Vera Flood, her husband Albert comes to sit to her left. She takes his hand and the hand of Mrs Vandermeer to her right. The others join hands too, completing the circle. Vera takes a sip from a ceremonial china cup. Captain Mills' nerves are failing; he kisses the ladies handkerchief deeply. And they are ready.

Sitting opposite the 'guests', at the centre of the table, is the veiled old woman, hunched over muttering in silence. Her dress is silk, eastern print. Albert speaks: there is no melodrama to him, his words are soft and heartfelt; not the faux theatrics of a sideshow ritual.

ALBERT
Life given. Life returned. Life given death lifted. Take this life force, consume its flesh. Open our eyes to what is lost.

As he speaks the old veiled woman places the dead song bird under a bell jar which stand on the table. The jar replaced and the old veiled woman places her gnarled hands on it, her long fingernails against the glass. As Albert continues, the others join his chant.

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ALBERT (CONT'D)
(joined by guests)
Memento mori. Memento mori.
Memento mori. Memento mori.

As they chant, all the guests bow their heads to look intently down at their memento mori on the table before them. When they look up, the song bird under the bell jar is already in advance stages of decomposition. Maggots and flies.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Who? Whose loss? Please?

The old woman's gnarled finger taps the surface of the bell jar. And either side of Mrs Vandermeer, Vera and Captain Mills both jolt. Out of their noses a rich scarlet red dribble of blood runs. Mrs Vandermeer glances left and right - she has been chosen. She can't bear the tension.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
This woman? This grieving
woman?

The candles in front of only Mrs Vandermeer are all extinguished in the same instant.

Florence too is nervous now, her breathing building.

The veiled woman reaches over and takes a few strands of blond hair in Mrs Vandermeer's fingers.

Mrs Vandermeer is almost in pain, watching as the woman dips the hair in the bowl of songbird blood, holds it in one of the naked flames until it dries and crackles. As the hair burns, she lifts the bell jar and lets a slip of smoke inside with the rotting bird, then inhales the rest through the veil.

Mrs Vandermeer gives a quiet whimper. Florence too is in distress; something brewing in her. The songbird's dead eyes stare in alarm from the carcass.

Slowly the old woman lifts her veil. But what is revealed is in fact the face of a wizened old man: EDGAR HIRSTWIT.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
(to Mrs Vandermeer)
Don't look away. You mustn't
look away.

Then after a moment, in the reflection on the glass of the bell jar, over Mrs Vandermeer's shoulder, a small blonde child appears from the gloom.

Silence... It is A LITTLE GIRL with long blonde hair. Her face is unclear but she stands behind Mrs Vandermeer, at her shoulder in the dim light. Her expressionless face is pale as snow. Tears of pain and elation erupt down Mrs Vandermeer's face.

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MRS VANDERMEER
Rose? Rose, darling.

Suddenly IN A BLUR someone grabs “ROSE”. It is Florence and she is ripping a long blond wig from the head of the “spirit girl”.

FLORENCE
Sergeant, the curtains!

Evans (the Bank Clerk) has also leapt up and ripped open the heavy curtains. The sudden brightness hitting Mr and Mrs Vandermeer, stricken and confused by what they see. Like a nightclub in the morning, the aura of magic and glamour has very much gone.

Florence holds a LITTLE BOY with short-cropped hair and white grease-painted face. Captain Mills tries to intervene but Florence is ferocious.

FLORENCE (CONT’D)
Stay there, Captain!! If you’re a captain at all.
(to Evans)
Sergeant Evans, guard the door!

Captain Mills slumps back down and Evans comes to stand over him. Mr Vandermeer has rushed to see to his upset wife. Florence pulls the shawl off Edgar and finds the songbird executed minutes earlier. Edgar faints and falls to the ground.

EDGAR
My spirit.

Florence is on fire, we see now the emotion brewing in her during the seance was plain anger and it fuels her authority over the room now.

VERA
You’ll kill him!

EVANS
I’ll fetch a doctor.

FLORENCE
No!

Florence has taken a brooch from her chest and she now sticks the pin into one of the old man’s nail beds. He’s very much awake.

EDGAR
AHHH!

FLORENCE
And the Hippocratic oath doesn’t apply here.

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EVANS
Miss Cathcart, you shouldn't do that.

Florence is fired up. She grabs the sacrificial knife from the table and stabs it down into Albert's hand on the table. Everyone shrieks. Except Albert. The hand is false.

FLORENCE
Who in this room is in most pain?

A moment of silence as Evans' eyes scan the room settling on Mrs Vandermeer, her sobbing face buried in her husband's chest.

Albert is familiar with Florence's surname and spits it out...

EVANS
Vera Flood, I arrest you under Section Four of the 1824 Vagrancy Act, for fraudulently obtaining --

ALBERT
'Cathcart, Florence Carthcart'. How dare you come here on false pretences. Your soldier boy even dead?

This cuts at Florence. She points to the rotten songbird.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
And this grotesque charade will not bring him back.

Florence moves round the room pointing out her evidence. The blood on Captain Mills' lip, Vera's cup, the false arm...

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Neither will *your* blood capsules which you slipped from your handkerchief and your cup as we started, nor *your* free hand...
(points under table)
..pulling the wicks from this woman's candles, as if the dead have something against naked flames!
You're charlatans. And poor ones at that.
Get them out of here.

Evans leads them out. Florence steadies herself on the back of a chair and as the tension is released. She retrieves the photo. Then alone in the room Florence's mood shifts visibly; the thrill of the chase leaves her and a melancholy begins to descend.

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3 EXT. OUTSIDE VERA FLOODS'S, DEVONSHIRE STREET - DAY 3

Police Constables place Vera, Albert and Mills in a vehicle and remove evidence from the house, including the false arm which two officers are pretending to grab nosey children with. Florence is about to walk away carrying the melancholy which we saw descend on her inside. Evans catches her.

EVANS
(embarrassed)
Er, Miss Cathcart. I don't mind, well it just that when we do these things (raids), you've taken to ordering me around a little. And what with you being...

FLORENCE
You don't want your colleagues seeing you bossed by a civilian woman?

EVANS
(grateful)
I mean if I was going to be ordered round by anyone it'd be... I mean if Mrs Evans wasn't, well if she wasn't *Mrs Evans*...

FLORENCE
(warm)
But she is. And she's lucky she is. I won't bully you any more. Promise.

Out of nowhere a hand slaps Florence across the face. Mrs Vandermeer is responsible and she is held back by Evans and another officer. She looks at Florence, still tear stained.

MRS VANDERMEER
You've never had a child have you?
Of course you haven't.

Mrs Vandermeer walks away leaving Florence visibly wounded. She also leaves with a photograph of her dead lover in her hand.

4 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY 4

Florence is standing frozen on the pavement, staring into space. Motionless, as people pass her by: two women arm in arm, a nanny and toddler, two more women with an old man. Children, women and the elderly. When we see Florence again, she is crouched to one side. Head down.

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5 INT. ENTRANCE HALL, CATHCART HOUSE - DAY 5

A maid is helping Florence with coat when her elderly parents appear from the drawing room: HARRIET AND ALEXANDER CATHCART. They look anxiously at her. Florence seems to acknowledge their concern.

FLORENCE
Please don't. Mother, please don't say anything.

The doorbell goes. She beats the maid to the job and opens the door. On the step outside is ROBERT MALLORY; a rare sight in London - a man in his thirties.

Then she spots that he is clutching a copy of her book '*Seeing Through Ghosts*'.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Oh for heaven's...

Frustrated, Florence grabs the book from his hands as she speaks, and pulls out a pen.

Mallory's face is handsome but it has lived more than its years; he has fought but may also still be fighting. Although he is not overtly unpleasant, he clearly does particularly not care if Florence, or indeed anyone, likes him or not.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Who shall I make it out to?

MALLORY
I'm sorry?

FLORENCE
Please Mr..?

MALLORY
Mallory.

FLORENCE
(writing)
'Mallory' ...this is my *home*, you'll forgive my brevity. There. I'm glad you enjoyed the book.

MALLORY
I didn't.

FLORENCE
I beg you pardon?

MALLORY
I didn't much like your book.

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ALEXANDER
I shouldn't worry, nor did I.

MALLORY
I found it too...certain. But perhaps that's only fitting from someone so rude to strangers.
I'm the history master of a boy's prep school...

HARRIET
She is not taking more work. She is quite exhausted...

ALEXANDER
Let the man speak Harry.

FLORENCE
I'm afraid 'Harry' is right, I'm not taking any more work.

MALLORY
But you are a ghost hunter as well as an author?

FLORENCE
Not really. You can't hunt what doesn't exist.

Mallory steps towards her.

MALLORY
Well that's just it. We think we have one which does.

Florence knows she must be polite. She turns to the maid.

FLORENCE
Show Mr Mallory to my study, I need to change.

6 INT. FLORENCE'S STUDY - DAY 6

Florence enters in trousers - scandalous in their day but she looks terrific. Her hair is down. It is clear her more orthodox clothing from earlier was part of the subterfuge. Florence has a style of her own, assembled intuitively - modern, striking and effortless. But it is also a style which suggests she is out of place. Mallory is waiting.

It is a large upper-drawing room, converted for Florence's idiosyncratic profession. And it is a temple to obsessive order, logic and control. The tables pushed to the side of the room are covered with all manner of equipment.

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But in the middle of the room, over which Mallory has to carefully tread, are neat piles of papers, laid in an exact grid pattern, many topped with photographic prints. As he talks she replaces the photo of lover on the mantelpiece.

MALLORY
Our Matron is a fan of your book and told the headmaster about...what you 'do'. She assured him that you are quite respected. Your book 'sits next to the bible on many bookshelves'.

FLORENCE
Instead of, I'd hope.

Mallory is ready to start his pitch.

MALLORY
Miss Cathcart,...rumour is a dangerous thing..?

FLORENCE
(understanding)
Conversations in this room are confidential Mr Mallory. *Especially* if I don't take the case.

MALLORY
Our school is called *Rookwood* in Hampshire. Some years ago, a child was said to have been murdered there. Not a pupil, it was a private house then.

FLORENCE
Who? Did they catch the killer?

MALLORY
There's no record, but..Important family, all hushed up. It's still perfectly possible someone died there.

FLORENCE
(sarcastic)
And it's perfectly possible they're still dead. What's this to do with the school?

Mallory hands Florence a newspaper clipping, headline: "POLICE BAFFLED BY DEATH AT ROOKWOOD" *

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MALLORY
This was three weeks ago.

7 INT. LANDING, CATHCART HOUSE - DAY 7

Harriet is at the top of the stairs watching Florence's door; her face a picture of anxiety. Alexander - less nosey - is still at the bottom of the stairs stuffing his pipe.

ALEXANDER
Half of that poor man is still in the trenches. You can always see it.

He takes in Harriet's worried face and walks out of sight into the hall. From there he calls up - a suddenly more serious man.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)
You know, I don't believe I saw that girl smile until she was twenty two.

He walks back into view, looking back up at her.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)
How many whole days of unhappiness is that, do you think?

HARRIET
I'm not suggesting she give up her work entirely... I just want her to be happy.

ALEXANDER
I imagine she does too.

8 INT. FLORENCE'S STUDY - DAY 8

Florence takes a cigarette from a man's silver cigarette case and lights it from a desk lighter. Her face is alive again - like it was during the exposure of the Vera Flood hoax.

MALLORY
His name was Walter, Walter Portman. A few days before he died, the boy came to matron absolutely quaking, convinced he had seen a ghost.
The ghost. Of the murdered child.

FLORENCE
And how does he know what the (child looked like)...?

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He cuts her off by handing Florence a 1902 school photograph from his bag. Perhaps 100 hundred boys, lined up in front of the Rookwood building.

MALLORY
This was taken eighteen years ago.

He points to the end of one of the lines, at an eerie blurred figure of a child. Florence has already found her answer.

FLORENCE
Mr Mallory, this is an old school prank. As the camera sweeps across to expose the negative, one...

MALLORY
(interrupting)
...one of the boys runs behind the row, I know, to appear in both ends.

FLORENCE
He was still moving when it reached him.

MALLORY
But that was 1902. This was ‘03.
(hands more photos)
Oh-4. Oh-6.

He image he hands her has more and more children in it, perhaps 250 in the last, but each has exactly the same blurred child on the end of one of the rows.

FLORENCE
Nothing since then? Could it be the culprit left the school? Mr Mallory you have come very far...

MALLORY
(persisting)
All the boys in the school are accounted for. All of them. In all the photographs. Even this one...1905.

He places one last image down.

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MALLORY (CONT'D)
Miss Cathcart, I can understand a child running the length of the line in the fifteen seconds the camera takes to make it's sweep, what I cannot explain is how he could get ...there.

On the 1905 photo there is NO blurred child on the end of the line. Instead, Mallory points to a blurred child standing in one of the upstairs windows of the school building. It is a harrowing image - a child twisted and contorted by apparent motion during exposure; it also makes him look unbearably sad.

Florence stands and walks out among the neat piles of paper - picking up the occasional photograph on the top of them as if she were able to call on any pile to support her case.

FLORENCE
The Trilby Man...a simple superimposition.
(another)
The Chiswick Remembrance Ghost... either a partially exposed batch of photographic plates or the same ghost was in my mother's potting shed.
I've explained your phenomenon, as I said, I can't take this...

MALLORY
There have been numerous sightings, parents are threatening to remove their children.

FLORENCE
I'm not interested in the commercial fortunes of your...

MALLORY
The boys believe...

FLORENCE
...The boys believe in Santa Clause and the tooth fairy. Some of them I'm sure even believe in god.

MALLORY
They are as good as orphans Miss Cathcart.

This rocks Florence.

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MALLORY (CONT'D)
(holding her book)
I'm not saying that because of your own 'circumstances'...

FLORENCE
Then why say it?

MALLORY
(reading from her book)
"Fear is all I remember of my childhood. I have glimpses of my parents' death but nothing of our life in Kenya, or coming to London; nothing but a feeling of perpetual, black terror."

FLORENCE
Your tactics are despicable.

MALLORY
(continuing)
"Fear swallows children. And the adults we become."
They aren't worried about bumps in the night. They are frightened. To death.

FLORENCE
Please leave.

Mallory clearly feels she is acting more offended than she is.

MALLORY
You strike me as a woman who'll not be forced to do anything.
(leaving)
I'm at the Wellington hotel. Thank you for your time.

9 EXT. LONDON PARK - EVENING 9

Florence is by herself. Dotted all round the park, occasionally accompanied by a bored child, are single women; standing or sitting alone, as if the men who accompany them have been erased from the picture.

Harriet joins Florence, accompanied by Alexander who listens but keeps his distance.

HARRIET
I've come to see you're alright.

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FLORENCE
(fond familiarity)
No you haven't. You've come to ask me not to accept the case at Mr Mallory's school.

Harriet isn't happy about this but lets her daughter find her own time to speak.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I was struck today.
By a mother. Because I'd robbed her of...doubt.

HARRIET
Darling. We know the pain you have...

FLORENCE
I don't want to talk about Charles, this has nothing to do with him.

HARRIET
I am talking about you. You're not living darling. Not here with us. You're living among dead people.

FLORENCE
Dead people are dead mother. And gone.

Alexander has suddenly realised something about Florence - something more insightful than he first seemed capable of.

ALEXANDER
She doesn't want to live among the dead. Or condemn another grieving mother.

FLORENCE
(confirming he is right)
I can show those boys, there is nothing to fear.

Fire has again entered Florence and she hurries away to prepare.

10 EXT. COUNTRY LANDSCAPE - DAY 10

We are floating high above a landscape - and bellow us a steam train crashes into frame, kicking smoke high into the air.

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11 EXT. COUNTRY LANDSCAPE - DAY 11

The train streams and steams past us down the track.

12 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 12

A motor car carrying Florence, Mallory and a dozen leather boxes trundles past the hedgerows. A young man, JUDD, is driving.

13 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY 13

The car passes through some gates into the school grounds. Mallory notices Florence glancing at the school sign as they pass it, complete with Latin motto.

FLORENCE
"Semper Veritas". Always the Truth. We'll see.

There is still something abrasive about Mallory - visible in his cynicism.

MALLORY
Latin gives a new school air of respectability. Means they can add a pound to the fees.

FLORENCE
And I imagine a 'bone fide' ghost knocks it right off again?

MALLORY
(dry-sarcastic)
Latin puns. What fun.

Mallory's dry sarcasm amuses Florence; she leaks a smile at him.

Suddenly a child runs out in front of them and Judd needs to swerve to a stop. The kid, RAMSBOTTOM, stops too and looks back at Florence. Other boys - taking part in a cross country race - are now gathering, gazing at Florence, the beautiful novelty.

JUDD
What are you, sheep? Gawping? Go on!

He lurches the car towards them and they scatter.

MALLORY
Judd.

Judd looks from Mallory to Florence. He studies her through his glasses. There is something different about him, something even attractive. Florence spots Mallory's distaste for Judd.

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As the car starts up again, the kids resume their race and soon the car is travelling along side the running boys. Florence watches the skinny legs, mud splattered vests and warm breath steaming in the cold air. Still at the head of the run is Ramsbottom who again glances across at Florence.

The car clears the treeline and Florence does not initially notice the house. When she does it is impressive. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL FOR BOYS is a massive unapologetic building - a former grand country house - which possesses the landscape round it. *

Florence is trying to take in her surroundings but the rocking of the car is making her feel ill. She notices that Mallory has spotted this but she isn't about to let him think she is weak and brushes off his concerned look.

As the car approaches the school, they pass MR McNAIR who stands in a scarf and thick overcoat watching the boys run past. He is coughing from damaged lungs and after a good blast, turns his head to spit a heavy mouthful to one side. He does this without a moment's consideration for the weedy, husk of a boy, shivering in school uniform at his side: TOM. Tom jumps out of the way of the spit and looks up like a spaniel puppy at Mr McNair as he roars at the boys.

MCNAIR
Knees. Knees, Parry. Howell.
You're running with your toes!
Last stretch, all of you.
Except you Tebbitts!

McNair resumes his hacking heavy cough, made worse by shouting.

14 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL DRIVE - CONTINUOUS 14

The car pulls up in front of the school front door and Mallory helps Florence down. McNair passes them still coughing, Judd * hands him a handkerchief which he immediately uses to suppress * his coughing as he continues inside. *

MCNAIR *
Thank you Judd. *

The school matron, MAUD HILL, is formally waiting for Florence's arrival. Everything about her is scrubbed and in place.

MALLORY
Miss Florence Cathcart this
is Miss Hill, the school
Matron.

FLORENCE
How do you do?

Maud hangs back - frozen - staring at Florence who is quickly unnerved by this.

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MALLORY
Maud to you and me.
(Maud staring)
Maud?

Maud steps up closer to Florence and shakes her hand, never breaking eye contact. Florence makes it brief and moves through the archway towards the courtyard inside the building. Mallory walks with her.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
She's taken this hard. She can be an odd fish at the best of times. For a start she liked your book.

Mallory is again not smiling. Florence is starting to understand his dry humour and it produces a brief moment of connection between them. Florence stops almost laughs. Mallory too until the humour suddenly drains from him. Although not obvious to Florence, his hand goes to his leg as if in response to a pain.

As continues in towards the courtyard, Florence feels she has said something wrong and tries to follow him. She walks out into the courtyard and almost bumps into Maud who is standing motionless. Maud is now friendly, unrecognisable from moments earlier.

MAUD
I feel like I know you. I've read your book a dozen times at least! It's on my bookshelf next to the bible.

This is clearly a favourite line of Maud's. Florence resists giving the same answer as when Mallory had used it.

MAUD (CONT'D)
I've never met an educated lady before, not Cambridge and everything. Never mind someone famous.

FLORENCE
(embarrassed)
Oh. The Kaiser was famous, Miss Hill. I just wrote a book.

MAUD
Maud. Mr Mallory *told* you to call me Maud.

Maud is polite but her friendly smile doesn't *quite* relax.

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Florence then spots a child looking at her. It's Tom, standing some way off behind Maud and like the others he is clearly already smitten by the mere sight of a beautiful woman here in person. Maud follows Florence's eyeline to spot Tom also.

FLORENCE
Hello.

TOM
Hello.

Tom still gazing. This moment stretches beyond comfort. Maud looks alarmed at Florence's embarrassment, even jealous someone is speaking to her new friend...

MAUD
Did Mr McNair not say all boys inside, Thomas?

TOM
Tom.

MAUD
Aa!

Maud's miniature exclamation is enough, just. Tom betrays a little sulk of insolence and Florence watches him run inside.

MAUD (CONT'D)
(Sorry). Everyone's nerves shot to pieces...

She walks inside but almost immediately comes out again and approaches Florence. Her manner even more nervous and gauche than before.

MAUD (CONT'D)
Educated people don't always say what they mean. I've been here fourteen years, I know this place like the back of my hand and I'm not fooled by any ghostly nonsense.
I just wanted you to know. I'm at your service.

With a short curtsey Maud enters the school.

15 INT. ENTRANCE HALL, ROOKWOOD - DAY 15

Florence enters the tiled hall after Mallory. Judd is bringing in her boxes. On the wall of the huge stairwell are the stains left by two massive paintings, now gone. On other wall too the stains of pictures and cabinets, empty shelves where ornaments and stuffed animals were once displayed.

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Two pictures do remain: Florence looks up at a copy of *George Stubbs'* 'Lion Attacking Horse' and then to *Artemisia Gentileschi's* "Judith Slaying Holofernes'. The latter is a hugely violent picture of a bearded man being held down by two women as they hack his head off.

MALLORY
It's the boys favourite, John the Baptist I think.

Two lads (DOWDEN and RAMSBOTTOM) have cornered another boy (HOWELL) and are twisting his nipples. This isn't high jinx, it is mean. None of the children appear happy. Mallory strides over and strikes both offending boys hard across their heads.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Showers. Now. Howell, stick up for yourself. And get that hair cut.
(to Florence)
I'll introduce you to the Headmaster.

FLORENCE
(about the painting)
It's actually Judith slaying Holofernes. The story of a woman who stole into the camp of the enemy and seduced then beheaded their highest general.

Maud is half way up the stairs and is hugely impressed with Florence's knowledge. Judd registers this too. Mallory isn't amused and examines her.

MALLORY
This way.

16 INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY 16

Outside the office, Mallory knocks on the mahogany door, but he and Florence spin round when they hear the voice behind them.

PURSLOW
I'm not in. I'm out. Least I was out, now I'm in. You're the ghost lady, come through, come through.

REVEREND PURSLOW is a man of the cloth and of the bottle. He wears the same gown each day, clearly for days at a time. They follow him into his own office. He is carrying a tall pile of text books which he has to steady with one of his chins.

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MALLORY
Reverend Purslow, this is Miss Florence Carthcart.

PURSLOW
An educated woman. Well, glad you're here.

FLORENCE
Glad I can be of servi...

PURSLOW
(interrupting)
Child dying before a parent. Dreadful thing. I lost three of them. I imagine you don't believe in the afterlife Miss Carthcart.

FLORENCE
I do not, Reverend.

PURSLOW
Nor do I. Terrible isn't it? Do you mind if we walk?

Purslow is already out of the door with the others following.

17 INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 17

Purslow is on the move at a fierce pace down the corridor, with Florence and Mallory following. Florence picks up on Purslow's last comment...

FLORENCE
I'd say it was 'refreshing', from a priest.

PURSLOW
And as a priest I see it as my duty to keep the myth of god alive! What would we do without him? Start believing in ghosts no doubt.

Purslow stops and opens some large doors to a dining room of boys, now all in an austere school uniform which perfectly suits this stripped-bare building; row after row of silent, bleached children, eating their boiled meat and boiled veg in the pale light.

PURSLOW (CONT'D)
Miss Cathcart, There is fear here. An abundance of fear.

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FLORENCE
'Nothing in life is to be feared', Headmaster, 'only understood'.

PURSLOW
Mr Einstein.

FLORENCE
Marie Curie.

PURSLOW
Nevertheless. Please get rid of it.

Purslow enters the hall, a hint of threat in his tone? As Mallory speaks, Florence looks inside the dining hall...

MALLORY
After supper there's an hour of 'scrubs', compulsory reading to you. Lights out at eight. I'll show you where Walter was found.

18 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY 18

As Mallory has been speaking - Purslow crosses the hall to his seat as another boy, PARRY, carries his plate to his table. The table is almost filled with boys, most of whom have plates in front of them.

The boys eye one another as Parry approaches and the moment he sits down, every child at the table - including RAMSBOTTOM, DOWDEN, TOM, HOWELL - rises and leaves Parry sitting alone. The hall bursts with laughter. Parry sits motionless in misery. Tom has played along but has hated the whole experience. From the doorway, Florence can see he is hiding his own upset.

19 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY 19

Mallory and Florence walk away, she picks up on his offer.

FLORENCE
No. Thank you. You say you didn't know him well, I'd value the guidance of someone who did.

20 INT. LIBRARY - DAY 20

Maud leads a now highly concentrated Florence into the library. Mallory follows. Bookshelves, globe, several writing desks.

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Mallory points to a place on the floor on the far side of the room from the French doors.

MALLORY
We assume Walter was in here that night, his toy bear was found right over here (by the door)...

MAUD
(interrupting)
Mr Mallory.

She points at the alert Florence who is now almost cut off from the others by her focus on the surroundings.

MAUD (CONT'D)
(whispering)
She doesn't like any 'superfluous sound'.

Maud's eye's flash with excitement, she can't take her eyes off this young woman.

Florence scans the books on the shelves. On the blackboard is written: 'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old'

Beyond the blackboard, she spots a neat picture of a mouse, childishly carved on the wood panelling. She looks closely at it - touches it.

She sees the other scratched messages on other panels and the desks - 'Rubin stinks', 'DMT' and the occasional scratched drawing. Florence reads one of the inscriptions...

FLORENCE
'Ego Contemno Latin'
(translating)
'I hate Latin'. This you Mallory? The children can move round the house at night?

MAUD
Not at night.

MALLORY
Not after seven.

21 EXT. TERRACE OUTSIDE LIBRARY - DAY (CONTINUED) 21

Maud leads Florence and Mallory out of the French doors. Maud points at the ground several feet from the doors.

MAUD
There. Mr Judd the groundsman who drove you, he found him, about midnight.

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FLORENCE
This far back? And these doors weren't locked?

Florence looks back to where he was found then sees something on the ground. She picks it up - it is the eye of a toy bear.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
His bear, do you have it?

MAUD
In Front Office.

Maud is suddenly uneasy about leaving her, as if jealous of the time it will give Mallory with her. There is an attention Maud gives Florence which is not common. Almost suspicious. She reluctantly leaves to fetch the bear.

Florence surveys the scene and notices Judd at the other end of the building, walking with a ladder.

MALLORY
(seeing Judd)
Speak of the devil.

FLORENCE
Screaming?

MALLORY
No one heard anything.

FLORENCE *
(puzzled) *
With a dormitory just *
upstairs? *

Florence considers this. Mallory is still looking at Judd. *

FLORENCE (CONT'D) *
(of Judd)
You don't like him.

MALLORY
I have my reasons. It would be indiscreet...

FLORENCE
Robert I'm not looking for tittle tattle. I'm *
investigating a child's death.

MALLORY
(relenting)
Where are his glasses?

Florence notices Judd is no longer wearing his glasses.

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MALLORY (CONT'D)
He used to keep up the pretence. Used to have a bad limp too. Kept him out of the trenches.

Florence is considering this as Maud returns. She hands the bear to Florence; what we now call a classic 'Teddy Bear'. But Mallory has not taken his eyes off Judd who is now leaning the LADDER against the building.

MAUD
His mother couldn't bear to look at it.

FLORENCE
Thank you.

Florence examines the bear. Sniffs the fur. One eye has been plucked out - a match for the one she is holding.

Mallory's face darkens as he watches Judd climb higher and higher up the ladder. His hand is shaking.

Maud is watching Florence. Florence holds up the bears eye. *

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I think perhaps we ought to keep finding this to ourselves for now. *
(Maud nods agreement) *
Where in the house did he claim to have seen the ghost, the week before?

MALLORY
Maud, perhaps I can leave this to you?

Mallory steps away.

22 INT. DORMITORY - DAY 22

Florence and Maud walk down the dorm. Iron bar beds line the room in two rows. Each bed has a peg, chair and shelf. Spartan. More barracks than bedroom. One bed is stripped down to its mattress. Shelf empty. Personal possessions gone. Florence approaches.

She sees stains on the mattress, as if someone had wet the bed.

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23 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 23

Mallory struggles down the corridor. A boy - HARTLEY - is coming in the other direction with a book under his arm. Mallory is drenched in sweat.

HARTLEY
Are you alright sir?

MALLORY
Why aren't you at scrubs!?

HARTLEY
My book sir.

MALLORY
Go!!

Hartley dashes away as Mallory enters his room and slams the door shut.

24 INT. DORMITORY - DAY (CONTINUED) 24

MAUD
Are you going to look round the rest of the house?

Florence almost ignores the question - her mind working. Somewhere in the school below her, what sounds like a teacher is screaming at a pupil.

FREDDIE
(OS)
Be quiet! You will be quiet or so help me!

Florence barely registers this. She picks up his glasses, still folded on the book. She looks again at the stain on the mattress.

FLORENCE
Was he bullied?

MAUD
They called him Wheezy Walter. He was asthmatic.

FLORENCE
Who were his friends? Did he *have* any friends?

The regret on Maud's face reveals that there were no friends.

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MAUD
Miss Cathcart, this is a good school but if you're different, the wrong kind of different... His isn't the only mattress like this.

FLORENCE
Friends or not. Someone will know something.

25 INT. MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 25

Mallory is standing, steadying himself against the wall. Now alone his leg begins to shake uncontrollably. His face too flinches. It is a horrific, consuming flinch; like a man possessed. And Mallory hates it. He grips the iron bedstead trying to resist what is taking over him.

26 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 26

The door to Mallory's room lets a crack of light under it. We can just about hear a drinking glass smash to the ground.

27 INT. QUIET CORRIDOR - EVENING 27

There is nobody in the corridor. The polished wooden floor look likes someone will step into frame. They don't.

The school building is not a comfortable place - it is too quiet.

28 INT. UPPER LANDING - EVENING 28

Florence is still with Maud and passes a doll's house replica of Rookwood School. Florence stops and approaches it as Maud waits, watching her hero intently.

MAUD
What are you thinking now?

Suddenly in the distance Florence hears piano music and turns from the doll's house. Now giggling is added to the music.

FLORENCE
That 'Compulsory' reading' isn't quite what it sounds.

She walks off. Maud is amused and follows loyally on.

The music stops just before they pass the open door - Florence does not look into the music room. We do.

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A dust sheet covers the piano. There has not been *quite* enough time between the music stopping for this to have happened.

29 INT. CLASSROOM - EVENING 29

Maud and Florence enter the classroom.

MCNAIR
Silence!! Mr McGorian.

Mr McNair is walking down the aisle of the classroom as bits of Tennyson are read out by each pupil. Whoever's desk his cane comes crashing down on must stand to read the next passage. Florence notices a few empty desks, most notable one at the front. Dowden, Parry, Ramsbottom, Tom and Franklin are among the pupils.

MCGORIAN
Then spake King Arthur to Bedivere:

THWACK, McNair's cane comes down on the next desk. Any child whose desk he approaches look nervous. He is heading towards Tom's desk at the back of one of the rows. Tom is reading along, waiting but he looks up and watches Florence.

RAMSBOTTOM
The secret of today unsolders all. The goodliest fellowship of famous knights.

WHACK. Florence's mind drifts. Tom is watching this.

HOWELL
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep they sleep - the men I loved.

WHACK - Tom snaps out of studying Florence and gets ready.

FRANKLIN
I think that we shall... we shall never more...I think that we sh-shall never...

McNair can't stand it and takes over from memory.

MCNAIR
I think that we shall never more, at any future time, delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds!

WHACK - the cane skips Tom's desk and crashes on the desk of the boy next to him.

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Tom looks around him as if in relief but it is slightly feigned. Tom is well used to other kids not joining in on his jokes.

Then Tom catches Florence looking at him. She smiles kindly but it makes him shy, worried this will single him out to his friends and he looks away.

As the next boy begins to read, McNair, exerted by his own reciting, begins to cough again. His lungs clearly damaged.

TEBBITTS
Walking about the gardens and halls of Camelot.

Dowden begins coughing too, behind the lid of his desk. A subtle mockery which amuses many other boys, even Tom.

MCNAIR
EMERGE DOWDEN! EMERGE!

It is a routine they all know, especially Dowden. He pulls up his sleeves and hold out the insides of his forearms. Mcnair lays one vicious strike across the boys thin skin.

Tom sees Florence discreetly look away.

Dowden returns to his desk, crying silent tears. Then Florence notices the shaking fingers on McNair's left hand which turn the cane as he speaks...

MCNAIR (CONT'D)
Matron I presume you have brought this young lady to my classroom for a purpose, beside subjecting her to the outrageous behaviour of Mr Dowden.

MAUD
Mr McNair.
Boys, I know you are all upset about losing a dear friend...

Children look to one another - the phrase 'dear friend' isn't quite accurate. Florence sees this and takes it in.

MAUD (CONT'D)
...and you've all heard lots of silly stories about what happened that night. Well Miss Cathcart is here to put your fears to bed. She is one of the cleverest people in England... Miss Cathcart?

Florence is embarrassed by Maud's overstatement. Then..WHACK. All the boys rise to their feet.

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ALL BOYS
Good evening Miss Cathcart.

FLORENCE
Good evening. Sit, please sit. How many of you did Walter Portman talk to about this ghost?

No hands go up.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Well did any of you see this ghost boy for yourselves?

No one. The bullied boy Parry will not look at Florence. Then one hand goes up, it is DOWDEN, still drying his tears.

DOWDEN
I did Miss. I saw it.

MCNAIR
Stand, boy.

DOWDEN
(standing)
I saw it.

FLORENCE
If you will come with me and describe...

DOWDEN
It was horrible. His face was twisted, blurred and twisted. And...

FLORENCE
Would you rather we move...

But this boy wants to get something off his chest. There is a ripple of terror among the boys. Parry is now staring at Dowden.

DOWDEN
They didn't want to know. When I told the masters, Miss, but he was in the upper corridor, staring without looking,... Like in the photographs. It was him! Please kill it miss, please?

OTHER BOYS
Yes, please? Kill it, please!

Florence has seen enough and leaves with Maud.

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30 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS 30

Florence is fired up again, in full stride.

MAUD
Aren't you going to reassure them?

FLORENCE
You need more than words to do that, even when you're the 'cleverest woman in England'.

MAUD
Miss Cathcart, I know I seem an odd sort, but a woman like me, being with a *lady* like you...

Florence call tell she is apolgising for her odd manner.

FLORENCE
(taking her arm)
Maud, we're both ladies. And now team mates. So enough. The boys go home tomorrow?

MAUD
(Yes) But the ones with parents in far flung places stay behind. Other than that it'll be just us.

FLORENCE
Oh one night'll be plenty. Can Walter's dormitory sleep somewhere else in the house?

Far down the corridor a junior boy rings the bell. Children spill out of the classrooms around Florence. Mallory also approaches them from down the corridor, calm now.

MAUD
Er, we could move the mattresses to the gymnasium.

FLORENCE
Good and they must stay there. All corridors out of bounds. Mr Mallory, perfect timing.

31 INT. VARIOUS CORRIDORS & ROOMS - NIGHT 31

Maud is watching as Florence and Mallory fling open the leather boxes, and set up elaborate technical equipment. Trip wires across corridors, cameras on tripods etc...

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FLORENCE
(compact camera)
Pocket Premo, 12 exposure pack, ball bearing shutter and meniscus lens.
(bigger camera)
A single-lens-reflex for isolating a focal plane
(mini gramaphone barrel)
Sound recorder - part Edison, part Bell-Tainter. *
(glass bell jar)
Fumigator for measuring contact traces.
(slender weather vane) *
Marconi magnetic field detector.

The flurry of equipment is over. Florence is tapping powder into a 'flash ignition tray' complete with small candle stick.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
About four ounces of flash powder per tray.
(fills a tray)
When the wire is tripped, the aperture opens for a thirtieth of a second. The air is puffed, hitting the candle which ignites the flash powder.

Maud still seems unsure of this new-fangled technology.

MAUD
And it will see ghosts?

FLORENCE
Technology sees what's there Maud, not what a frightened mind imagines to be there.

Maud leaves, her concern eased. Mallory lifts a bunch of newspapers out of a box.

MALLORY
And this?

FLORENCE
Footprint catchers.

MALLORY
Ghosts have footprints?

FLORENCE
People pretending to be ghosts do.

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MALLORY
(taking in all the kit)
They must hate you.

FLORENCE
The spiritualists?

MALLORY
The ghosts.

Florence won't rise to the bait. She is intent on setting a complicated piece of equipment, a very delicate business. Mallory's humour is replaced by intrigue about her.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
You're so certain. So keen that people believe nothing.

FLORENCE
Oh that's the problem isn't it. As your headmaster said, take god away and people don't believe *nothing*, they believe *anything*.

She puts her equipment down and lights a cigarette.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
There's twenty million people missing from the world. If ever there was a time for ghosts.

MALLORY
(So) people <u>need</u> to believe? But not you. Even though you carry a man's cigarette case.

This stops Florence. She considers if to trust him. Eventually she nods - admitting what Mallory is suggesting.

FLORENCE
We weren't married. He was a Captain. Charles Marshall.
I'll admit that sometimes, I catch a glimpse of a man's jawline or a shoulder. And remember him so vividly, almost like he's there. But has the spirit of a man blown to bits a thousand miles away seen fit to visit me in the Ladies department of Sullivans? (No). We might want ghosts to be true. That doesn't mean they are.
(Mallory staring at her)
What? What?

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Mallory's is serious - his face firm.

MALLORY
I wonder if Walter Portman would agree?
(rises to leave)
I'll make my way to bed and stay there.

Mallory leaves. Florence closes the door after him. A wind gently rises outside.

She stands alone with her scientific equipment and listens.

32 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - NIGHT 32

Slices of moon on the lake. School building in a sea of dark.

33 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - NIGHT 33

Empty corridor. As we approach a corner we begin to turn slowly to back round it. We continue to turn, now revealing round the corner, threatening to reveal something. It never does and settles instead on just darkness.

34 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT 34

Silence. Two dozen boys, sleeping on mattresses on the floor.

The glow of an oil lamp emerges from the dark, held aloft by Maud. One boy makes a spooky "O-oo-oooooh!" Sniggering laughter.

MAUD
Master Ramsbottom.

Silence descends. She moves along, then sees skinny Tom in the last mattress, curled up under his blanket and goes over to him.

TOM
(whisper)
Will she do what they say? The lady?

She crouches by his mattress, combs his hair with her fingers.

MAUD
(whispering)
And what do they say?

TOM
That she'll kill the ghost. And that one boy a night will die until she does.

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Maud shakes her head at the extent of the boys rumours.

MAUD
She's not here to catch ghosts, she's here to catch naughty boys up to mischief.

TOM
She's very pretty, isn't she? Do you think she's lonely?

MAUD
Do you?

TOM
I think she is. Inside.

MAUD
(glancing round the dorm)
She'd fit in here then, wouldn't she?

They share a smile. She leaves, taking the lamp glow with her.

35 INT. MAIN HALL - ROOKWOOD - NIGHT 35

Stillness. Deserted. The sweeping staircase. The contorted face of Holofernes in the painting; blood arcing from his neck.

On the leather seat of a chair is the impression of where someone once sat. Florence's legs sweep past it.

A trip-wire. Florence bends down and touches it with her fine finger. It leads to a small bell suspended to one side.

36 INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT 36

By the door into the library, Florence lays down two sheets of newspaper. Then she sprinkles a dusting of white powder across them before carefully stepping past them and leaving the room.

37 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT 37

Tom has his eyes shut. Then he hears a boy's whisper.

BOY'S WHISPER
Parry?

He opens his eyes and turns over to see the bullied boy, Parry, lying in the next bed. Parry is awake.

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BOY'S WHISPER (CONT'D)
Parry?
Nobody...likes...you.

As muffled giggles are heard round the room, Parry's face crumples with tears. Tom watches this with deep sadness. There is nothing he can say. He rolls back over to face the other way.

38 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CLASSROOM - NIGHT 38

In the distorted world of convex mirror, we see Florence walk calmly past down the silent corridor.

Another trip wire. A galvanometer needle hovers on zero.

Another sheet of powdered paper. The house is a well-laid trap.

Florence is still. Listening. Then in the silence she hears again the man's voice calling out somewhere else in the house (*we will later learn that this is the voice of a man called FREDDIE*)...

FREDDIE
(OS)
Be quiet! You will be quiet or so help me!

Florence can tell another chattering child is receiving a telling off. She feels the cold now and moves off.

39 EXT. OUTSIDE GROUND FLOOR WINDOW - NIGHT 39

Through the window we see Florence making her way back towards the dorm. Judd's face is barely lit as he stands watching her.

40 INT. MCNAIR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 40

McNair is stripped to his vest. Coughing, he drips balsam mixture into a bowl of water and inhales deeply. On the bedstead beside him are Victorian pornographic images; frolicking women.

41 INT. EMPTY DORM - ROOKWOOD - NIGHT 41

Back in the dormitory a 'bell in vacuo' sits immobile. Florence places a wax blank in the device.

She fine-tunes the position of her camera facing the window. This brings her to spot a small collection of tiny dolls which are lined up on the window ledge.

A needle scratches on a mahogany-cased barograph. Florence checks her watch and notes time the time and pressure.

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42 INT. EMPTY DORM - ROOKWOOD - NIGHT 42

Florence finishes sealing the door of the dorm. She hears McNair's coughing. It stops...then begins again.

Absent-mindedly humming the nursery rhyme she heard earlier: "La Coccinelle", she walks over to where Walter's bear lies on one of the tables. Again she sniffs its fur.

43 INT. MAUD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 43

Maud, in bed clothes, kneels beside her bed in silent prayer. The bookmark she is using in her bible is illustrated comic-card popular in the day: this one is a parrot wearing a top hat.

But as she prays, her eyes suddenly open. Her knuckles whiten as they grip together.

44 INT. MAIN STAIRS - NIGHT 44

The fox's head stares at the empty stairwell. On the Stubbs painting, the horses eyes are bulbous, wild under attack.

A trip-wire vibrates ever so slightly in the breeze. A small bell attached to it shivers but no more.

45 INT. GYMNASIUM - ROOKWOOD - NIGHT 45

The boys' faces in the dark. Scared. A window rattles.

46 INT. EMPTY DORM - ROOKWOOD - NIGHT 46

Florence looks over at the door with its wax seals. She is patient.

Then she spots something. A prick of light in the old end wall of the dorm. She approaches, slowly.

On the floor at the foot of the wall is a plug of tissue paper which she picks up. And there in the wall is a tiny crack - seeping light. She bends slowly to peer inside, slowly, slowly...

47 INT. STAFF BATHROOM/EMPTY DORM - CONTINUOUS 47

Through the hole in the wall, picked through the plaster and between the bricks, Florence can see Mallory. He is lying in a hot bath, draped like *David*'s 'Death of Murat'.

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From the bathroom side her view is coming from a missing section of grout between two tiles. Only we know her eye is beyond it.

Mallory eventually stands revealing more of his body. Florence's breathing shakes. She has only seen one man's body before.

Mallory gets out and rubs down his body. Then he turns and for the first time she can see a deep wound on his thigh - covered with a huge, livid scab; a scab softened in the bath.

Calmly Mallory produces a small pocket knife from the chair by the bath and uses it to pick the edge of his scab. He slowly removes the whole scab, flinching in pain as he does. Fresh blood erupts from the injury onto to the white tiled floor. He takes up a small bottle, the label reads 'ZINC SULPHATE - Astringent, Emetic'. Then, as Florence stares in horror, he bites down on a towel and pours the liquid into the now open wound. The explosion of pain is enormous.

Florence flinches, her hands looking for something to grip as Mallory twists in horrific agony. He screams a muted, brutal scream into the towel and tears stream from his eyes. This is not reasonable treatment of an injury, this is something else. Mallory is close to passing out.

Florence's breathing has become broken and panicked. But then she is startled by a sudden noise from deep inside the building around her. A single chime from one of her tiny bells.

She is woken from her spying; flustered, furious with herself for not being ready as she gathers up an oil lamp and runs as quietly as possible from the room. The wax seals on the door pop as she opens it to the dark.

48 INT. LANDING OUTSIDE EMPTY DORM - NIGHT 48

Florence carefully steps round the flour-strewn newspaper. She looks all around. There is no sign of anybody.

She examines the tripwire at the top of the stairs. It is not broken but the seal on the door behind her is; the door ajar. She steps inside.

49 INT. BURSAR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 49

The desk stands in front of a fireplace. The main light does not work, Florence walks carefully with the oil lamp to the centre of the room. There on the floor is a single red wax crayon. She looks at it before realising that she is standing on a picture drawn with the crayon on the boards: a childish picture of a wolf leaping on a girl or young woman. She hears a noise back in the corridor, a board creaking.

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Florence is not frightened - but that is only by force of will. Carrying the protection of her logic round this house takes effort and focus.

50 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 50

Florence emerges back into the corridor. She steps over the trip wire and down the stairs.

51 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 51

Florence holds the oil lamp out in front of her as she makes her way through the dark. It is scarcely enough to shed light on the walls beside her.

We track with her, noticing the volume of dark in front of her, but also behind her.

Then, as if standing watching Florence, the figure of a child passes through frame just a few feet from us. We are quickly past it and it is gone. Florence continues on her way.

52 INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS 52

Florence enters the Library, stepping over the paper which she knows is there, hidden on the dark floor.

She stops still. The moon falls through the wind blown branches outside, through the French doors and into the room.

A corner of the room behind Florence is lit, then plunged into darkness. Lit, then dark.

Florence is calm, unsuspecting. She crouches in the middle of the room to read the dial on a piece of equipment. We see her hand touch the parquet floor as she lowers herself close to the ground. But when she goes to raise herself, she sees that now beside her hand is a puddle of LIQUID. Beyond it, beside the skirting some BROKEN GLASS.

Then she spots something on the glass pane of the French doors and approaches them. Taking a wooden blackboard eraser, she blows chalk dust onto the glass. It reveals FINGERPRINTS round the handle.

She hovers her hand over it, shifts her body, trying to reenact how someone could have made those prints. The pose is unnatural.

She shifts position, trying the pose ‘left-handed’. It works. Her left hand falling naturally onto the handle of the door.

Then she takes one of her large format cameras, rigged to ‘cover’ the french windows.

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She looks through at the upside down image and lines up to get a record of the fingerprints. Still under the cloth, she hears a faint ominous wheezing coming from within the room.

Florence freezes. Then, in the upside down image of the viewfinder, REFLECTED in the glass, she glimpses the blurred face of the child ghost, contorted by the glass, behind her in the dark threshold of the door. She rips the cloth off her head and spins in shock, knocking over her oil lamp which she fumbles to retrieve. The figure has darted out the room.

There are footprints on the powder sheets! Florence gives chase.

53 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR & MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS 53

Florence sees the figure, the height of a boy, slip around the distant corner and follows.

Several doors lead off the corridor. All closed. She checks her wax seal on each - the seals are intact. Then she hears feet running upstairs and again gives chase...

As Florence reaches the bottom of the stairs, the bell of the trip wire at the top goes off. She bounds up after it, thrilled by all this. She reaches the top and sees that the powder sheets at the top of the stairs have also been disturbed.

But just as she starts off down the corridor she hears a noise below her, and looks over the banister through the deep gloom of the atrium. There in the entrance hall a BLURRED, contorted face of a boy is staring up at her. She checks her run, completely thrown by what she has seen.

Ahead of her, on the same floor as her, a door seal cracks as a door opens. Florence makes her choice and, leaving the blurred face in the entrance hall, runs along the corridor after the white powder foot prints.

As she runs off, the blurred boy in the shadows of the hall far below her also dashes away.

Although still thrown by the sight down in the hallway, Florence follows the white powder prints which disappear under a door. On the door is *carved* 'Housemaid Stores'. Florence enters.

54 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS 54

Florence enters what is actually a laundry room - shelves piled high with white pressed sheets.

On the old boards of the floor, the white footprints trace someone's movement into the room but then they mingle with other footprints, the same but made of BLACK powder, not white.

Florence then sees a disturbed sheet on the top shelf.

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Florence clambers up the shelves. Whoever climbed up has escaped through a hatch into the upper corridor. Florence can't follow. But she is about to climb down when she finds a thin sheer silk sack. Pushed inside it her hand is indistinct, *blurred*.

In the distant, down a far off corridor, she can hear a child giggle.

55 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAWN 55

The lake is calm. In the dew on the grass, a man's boot-prints lead away from the house. Inside the building a hand bell rings.

56 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - DAWN 56

A sleepy boy in dressing gown is ringing the heavy bell.

57 INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - MORNING 57

Boys line up in single file outside the Headmaster's office. A teacher keeps an eye on them. Parry at the front. Dowden jumps the queue to stand behind him.

TEACHER 1
Sonitus. Ero. Silentium. Is that clear Master Broad? *

Mallory slips into the headmaster's office.

58 INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 58

Mallory enters with the boy. Florence is in there but diverts gaze when their eyes meet. Franklin and two others are holding the shoe and sock from their feet.

FRANKLIN
(to Mallory)
What have we all done, Sir?

Mallory is not permitted to answer. The three boys leave.

PURSLOW
And they couldn't have been made with socks?

FLORENCE
It would penetrate socks. The traces need only be minute. But no, they seemed bare foot.

The next boys enter: Parry, Dowden and Hartley.

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PURSLOW
Remove your right shoes and socks.

They do. Two soles are clear but as the spray covers the sole of Parry's foot, it lights up in bright mauve. The culprit. Florence's eyes again alive with the thrill of investigation. *

PURSLOW (CONT'D)
Parry!

PARRY
What? What did she put on us?

PURSLOW
I knew your father. *

FLORENCE
The night he died, Walter got out of bed, to go to the 'latrine'. He wasn't wearing his spectacles. On his way, he was ambushed by Mr Parry here. Chased him downstairs...

PARRY *
I didn't, I didn't do it to Walter.

FLORENCE
(continuing)
..., terrified him. And last night he tried the same on me! *
Didn't you!? *

Florence produces the sheer silk sack. Her eyes fierce as they * were in Vera Flood's parlour. Mallory sees she is over * aggressive and steps forward discreetly. *

MALLORY *
(whisper) *
Florence. *

Florence is immediately aware that he is right. Parry slumps * into submission. It is clear he is confessing. He knows Dowden and Hartley are watching him.

MAUD
Victor!

Parry is shamed and pathetic. Finally...

PARRY
(weakly)
They said if I did it they'd be nice.

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He begins to weep and slumps onto a chair. There is immediate pity in the room, apart from McNair.

MCNAIR
Stop sniveling.

MALLORY
Malcolm please.
Who?

Dowden is glaring at Parry. It takes all Parry's strength. He points at Dowden.

PARRY
Them.

DOWDEN
Scab.

MCNAIR
Be quiet!

PARRY
But I never did it before. Not to Walter. I liked Walter, we shared grots.

MALLORY
Victor...

PARRY
I didn't scare him. No one knows who did.

MALLORY
A boy is dead.

PARRY
It wasn't me!

Florence doesn't wish to make things worse for Parry and regrets having to continue.

FLORENCE
It's not just him. There was another boy last night.

DOWDEN
What?

PARRY
What?

MAUD
What did you see?

PURSLOW
You will...Dowden you're behind this.
(MORE)

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PURSLOW (CONT'D)
You will name the other boy now or you will be thrashed where you stand. Mr McNair.

McNair is up already sensing this is in the air. He moves past Florence and as he passes she smells something.

DOWDEN
(more worried)
There wasn't another boy!

Purslow considers this. But then nods to McNair. All of a sudden it resembles a wartime torture scene.

DOWDEN (CONT'D)
(terrified)
Honestly, there wasn't! Please. I'd tell you, please. Please Sir, there wasn't anyone!!

PARRY
There wasn't! It was just me. I promise.

Dowden is crying now, genuine tears of fear. McNair has pushed him against the desk and pulled down his shorts. His cane rises.

DOWDEN
PLEASE!!!

PARRY
Please, I promise!

FLORENCE
Stop!
(to Mcnair)
For god's sake! You have done quite enough damage. You will not do this.

PURSLOW
School discipline is not a matter for you....

FLORENCE
But the death of a child is. God, man, wasn't killing Walter enough?

McNair and the rest of the room freeze.

MCNAIR
What did you say?

FLORENCE
Whoever chased him downstairs, they are *children*! It was you who found him crying with fear in the library.
(MORE)

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FLORENCE (CONT'D)
The fingerprints, left-handed finger prints of a man are still there where the french doors were held shut.

Purslow and others notice McNair is holding the cane in his left hand.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
There are several left handed masters but none who sooth their chest with the balsam I smelled on you just now, had I not also found it on Walter's bear I (wouldn't)...

MCNAIR
I protest, this is tantamount to...

FLORENCE
(interrupting)
And did he protest? When you found him down there, ripped the bear from him and shut him out in the dark? I came here to protect children from fear and YOU are hell bent on making them live in it!

MCNAIR
You can't die of fear.

FLORENCE
But you can die of an asthma attack brought on by it!

Mallory takes Florence's elbow to calm her. It works.

PURSLOW
Malcolm?

MAUD
Mr McNair.

It's McNair's turn to slump into a chair. Silence now.

MCNAIR
Screaming about ghosts. What do any of you know about ghosts?

MAUD
There was no...Miss Cathcart's proved there's no such thing. Not here, not anywhere. Haven't you Miss?

Florence can't answer. A melancholy - like that she suffered at Vera Flood's house - is descending. And Mallory sees it.

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59 INT. SCHOOL CHAPEL - MORNING 59 *

The choir and amassed SCHOOLBOYS and parents sing a hymn in the chapel. An organ accompanies them: 'Be Still My Soul'.

Dowden is singing beside his parents. Maud too is there, she turns to cast a worried look at Florence - sitting at the back with the staff.

Florence does not sing. Her spirits - like her the tone of a her eccentric clothing - have darkened. Her face is lost; painted with the melancholy we saw in her after the Devonshire Street hoax. Her eyes fall on a plaque:

"IN HONOURED MEMORY OF ALL OLD BOYS WHO GAVE
THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918.
THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE."

She stands and leaves as the hymn continues.

60 EXT. CHAPEL - MORNING 60

Florence steps outside and lights a cigarette. She is surprised to find Mallory already out there. She looks at him as if to ask why he isn't inside. Mallory is almost embarrassed.

MALLORY
There was a chap called Bartel D'Arcy, Irishman, he'd sing this hymn most sunsets. *
It's odd, separating past from present, any 'memoranda' of that time... *
(studies her) *
The boys are transformed, you should be pleased. *

She is clearly not. *

FLORENCE *
There is more to this. McNair said Walter was screaming, but no one heard a thing? What if someone kept him quiet? What if it was the other child I saw last night? *

MALLORY *
(still studying her) *
That's for the police to establish. But that's not why you haven't slept. *

FLORENCE *
I can't say I'm proud of ruining a damaged man. *

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MALLORY
I believe you. 'Semper Veritas'. Truth comes at a price. But you're not just thinking about Malcolm. There's something else.

FLORENCE
Of course there isn't. I'm just tired. I've done what was asked of me. Proved there is nothing to fear. Nothing.

This last word is bitter in her mouth. She has walked off alone into the grounds. Mallory watches her go, troubled by her.

61 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS 61

Florence crosses the lawn, among the trees, glad to be alone.

62 EXT. CHAPEL - DAY 62

Staff and families spill out of the church. Headmaster Purslow is with them.

PURSLOW
You've the sixth form service too Mrs Swingler, you're not escaping that easily!

Parents trudge off back toward the school. The chatter is excited and buoyant. They pass a sulky looking Tom who is standing beside Maud.

MAUD
(to Tom)
Getting to go home, sweets and puddings, lucky beggars. Still, we'll have a nice time.

TOM
Always say that. 'Lucky beggars'. You always say that.

Tom watches Parry standing meekly beside his mother who is chatting with Purslow; an only child. Tom's eyes trail over from one potential friend to another: Florence, who he can see walking deeper into the trees.

As Parry walks past Tom, he turns to look directly at him. But Tom is now staring down towards Florence. Parry walks on beside his mother.

Maud is also watching Florence; her face etched with concern.

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63 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY (CONTINUED) 63

Florence can hear the happy chatter behind her. Judd's voice surprises her. He is carrying a shot gun.

JUDD
You'll ruin your boots.

FLORENCE
Oh, they'll buff up.

Judd is not overtly unfriendly but there is something which Florence finds unsettling.

JUDD
You going home. Found your ghost.

FLORENCE
Well that was rather the point though; prove there *wasn't* a ghost.

JUDD
Still that's why you were here wasn't it? Another case to write up while Mr McNair's ruined. After all he's been through.

FLORENCE
I wonder if *any* of us knows what he went through Mr Judd.

She is deliberately sharp with this and makes to leave.

JUDD
You shouldn't talk to me like that.

FLORENCE
Excuse me?

Florence sees that he is deadly serious and that she has offended him.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. You're right. I.. I just wanted to...

JUDD
(interrupting)
Think I don't know staying at home was wrong? You come down here to tell me that?
(MORE)

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JUDD (CONT'D)
Let me tell *you* a thing, ghost-hunter: it's the living you want to watch for, not the dead.

It isn't clear if this is a threat or a statement of regret. She * is tired and vulnerable. As Judd wanders off, she hurries back towards the school building and the lake.

64 EXT. CHAPEL & LAKE - CONTINUOUS 64 *

Up by the chapel, families and boys are still walking back * across the open heath towards the school. *

Florence reaches the wooden boards of the small jetty. *

Maud watches her through the passing families. Mallory too. From * their position Florence looks like a statue. *

Standing on the jetty, striking in her tailored great coat, Florence takes out another cigarette. Smoke flicks from her mouth round her confused face.

Then as she closes the case, Judd's shot gun fires not too far off. She drops the case, which spills it's contents, and stops * in the middle of the jetty. *

Florence bends to collect the scattered cigarettes. She hears a * 'plop' as something enters the water. When she turns back the * case is gone. Florence could not have knocked it in. She is * horrified and rushes to the edge, trying to see down in to the * water. Nothing, only her face and the pale sky above her.

She considers this. Then without rolling up a sleeve, she leans over the edge and sinks her arm deep into the dark water. The reflection of her face staring back at her. *

From behind she seems to be leaning over the edge. Florence's eyes are full of tears, staring at herself.

Maud's face is taut with concern as she watches. Mallory's too. *

Then, slowly the blurred face of the Child Ghost emerges under the water. This is not a reflection, this is in the water, just beyond Florence's pale fingers.

Florence stares at the child, tears dripping into the cold lake.

FLORENCE
You are not. You are not. There is nothing.

Florence's face is twisted with emotion and confusion as she slips off the jetty and into the dark, silent water.

CUT TO:

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65 EXT. ROOKWOOD LAKE - DAY 65

Florence is thrashing round as Mallory is struggling to get her head above water. Mallory had obviously made it to her first but Maud, Purslow, Tom and many others are on the bank, trying to reach them.

Florence's vision of the people on the bank is blurred. All their faces are blurred. Eventually Mallory hauls himself, with Florence, back onto the bank. They are safe. Florence lies back, blue with cold and in the silence she does not see the gathered faces - Purslow, Maud, Tom and others - staring in pity and confusion.

From across the lake, Judd watches calmly; shotgun over shoulder.

66 INT. SCHOOL KITCHENS - DAY 66

Florence is sitting huddled in a blanket on a chair beside the ovens. Maud is standing shocked, looking at her. Tom is someway back across the room, half reading his boys own adventure book. Florence is embarrassed by the silence.

FLORENCE
(to Tom)
Your ma and pa overseas, Tom?

MAUD
They live in India.

Florence understands but can still feel Maud staring awkwardly at her. Maud's hero worship of Florence seems to have been tarnished and she makes herself busy elsewhere in the kitchen.

TOM
It takes three weeks to travel to India. They have tigers there. Have you been?

FLORENCE
No. No, but I've seen the lions in Africa.

TOM
(moving nearer)
You've seen lions?

FLORENCE
When I was little. One even attacked me.

TOM
How come you're not dead?

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Florence welcomes the distraction, her mind is never too far from Maud.

FLORENCE
(shows scars on collar bone)
I was rescued by a guide - actually a tribal chieftain.

TOM
Did he kill the lion?

FLORENCE
Well I was very young. I think so. The villagers looked after until help came, called me their 'Mowa-Zee', 'white doll'. I wonder what they would think today, seeing me in such a silly state.

Maud can't stay silent anymore.

MAUD
Tom, can you leave us now.

TOM
Were your mother and father with you, were they killed?

FLORENCE
I'm afraid they were.

MAUD
Tom. Miss Cathcart and I want a grown up conversation.

TOM
I like grown up conversations.

MAUD
Now. *

Maud's authority is once again gentle but absolute.

TOM
Goodbye 'Mowa-Zee'.
(giggles)

MAUD
Thomas.

Tom has hopped from the chair and left them alone.

FLORENCE
Maud, it was an accident...

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MAUD
How could someone like you want to do such a thing...?

FLORENCE
(interrupting)
Maud, please, I don't wish to talk about it.

Florence rises to go.

MAUD
Don't go. Miss, something has happened to you, you can't go home now...

FLORENCE
Stop, stop calling me Miss Cathcart. I'm Florence and I can't stay here Maud, I'm sorry.

She leaves. Tom has listened from a doorway and sees Maud is upset.

67 INT. STAFF BATHROOMS - DAY 67

Florence enters and Mallory is finishing running her a bath. Mallory's jacket is off but his shirt is still wet.

FLORENCE
Thank you.
I won't trouble you anymore.
I'll be gone in an hour.

Mallory is ready to leave but stops. He is close to her now.

MALLORY
Why?

FLORENCE
(knowing this was coming)
Good God Robert.

They stare at one another in silence. Finally, frustrated she is giving nothing more away, he leaves.

In the corridor he turns through into the dormitory next door. Florence regrets not saying more. She is numb.

INT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS *

Mallory enters to pass through the dorm but pauses. Thinking. *

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68 INT. SCHOOL KITCHENS - DAY 68

Maud is with Tom. Vegetables are round them on the table, which Maud is reluctantly chopping.

TOM
You're cross with me. Something I've done.

MAUD
(frustrated)
It's not always something *you've* done.

TOM
You're sad because you don't want to stay here and look after me.

MAUD
Tom there are times when a child needs to just be quiet! Why do you children...!? *

Maud's uncharacteristic outburst is more than Tom was expecting with his sulky jibes. She can see his confusion.

MAUD (CONT'D)
I was frightened. By what just happened. Why does that have to be something to do with you?

Tom takes this in. Fed up.

TOM
It's not fair on children. They want to make things right and they don't know how.

MAUD
They don't need to know how. Sometimes they need to be quiet and do as they are told.

69 INT. STAFF BATHROOMS - DAY (CONTINUED) 69

Florence's hand slides the door lock into place.

She sinks into the water, reacting to the heat which surges into her body. Silence. The water laps round the dip at the base of her throat, round a series of faint scars, like claw marks, across her collarbone.

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Florence's eyes are shut. Her hand rests on her thigh. It moves across. Her eyes are still shut as she breathes in and shifts her position slightly.

Suddenly there is a tiny noise in a next door room and her eyes open. Behind her head, across the room, is the wall with the crack through which she looked at Mallory.

Florence waits a moment before slowly standing up in the bath; her back to the wall but making no attempt to cover herself. She steps from the bath, thrilled and scared by what she is doing.

The crack between the tiles is still there. Florence dares herself to turn and face the wall. Her eyes are lost, confused and excited by the recklessness of what she is doing.

Finally she brings herself to look straight at the crack in the wall.

FLORENCE
I know you are there, Robert.
And I don't mind.

She climbs out of the bath and, still naked, slowly approaches the crack in the wall. Breathless now, standing close to the wall, close to the crack. She summons the courage to lean and look back at him through the crack. As she approaches...

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Don't run away. Please don't run away. *

Her eye reaches the crack. NOTHING - the dormitory is EMPTY.

Suddenly the blurred face of the child ghost steps into view; its twisted features stretched in terrifying pain.

Florence leaps back from the wall with a SCREAM! She scrabbles for the robe, wrapping it round her as she flies to the door, rips open the lock and heads for the dormitory next door...

70 INT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS 70

Florence bursts into the dormitory. A tiny figure - a blur is running out but it is a playful skip-like run that seems to touch the ground too lightly as it disappears out of the far end of the dormitory. She is after it.

71 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 71

She flies down the corridor seeing a door ajar, moving slightly, leading to small stairway up...

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72 INT. NARROW STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS 72

Florence scrambles bare-foot up the stairs and bursts through into the attic...

73 INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS 73

Florence stops - still wet from the bath and out of breath. Above her head is the sloping roof of the building. Dormer windows. The attic is empty but for the large dolls' house, the replica of Rookwood School.

She hears a little noise inside and approaches it and as she gets nearer she bends to look in through one of the windows. As she nears one of the windows, a mouse darts out of the front door. She jumps - her nerves frayed.

She bends a looks again. In one of the upper windows is a bedroom with a fireplace. Apparently hand made, featureless dolls have been left in some sort of scenario. Florence quickly takes this in: a 'female' doll in white dress and scarlet sash stands by the fireplace. A 'male' doll with a stick has been placed beside it. And it seems a third doll has even been left under the large double bed. Florence looks in another window.

Her eye comes level with the ground floor window - the LIBRARY. There are the books shelves, a globe and writing desks. She is about to move away when she spots something on the 'floor' in front of the tiny door...

It is a perfect replica of a piece of newspaper, scattered with white powder. Beside it is a tripod with a tiny camera on it.

Florence tries to take this in. She hurriedly looks for another window - the HEADMASTER'S STUDY. In this room - a replica of the real room downstairs. The dolls here are again featureless but the costumes accurately enough reproduced to be clear who they are intended to represent... There is a MINIATURE PURSLOW doll with the pile of books tucked under his chin, standing with a MINIATURE MALLORY and miniature of FLORENCE herself.

Moving to another window Florence is looking into the CLASS ROOM and the beating of a tiny DOWDEN doll in front of the whole class - and MAUD and FLORENCE, all now in miniature.

At another window - the DORMITORY - Florence's equipment and tiny leather boxes are scattered about. And at the far end of the tiny room, yet another miniature FLORENCE DOLL is crouched at the crack in the wall...

She rushes to the next window - the STAFF BATHROOM where a MALLORY doll is sitting on the edge of the bath, a tiny red mark daubed on his 'thigh'.

By the time Florence rises to look through one of the ATTIC dormer windows she knows what she will see.

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Dressed in a tiny bathrobe, is MINIATURE FLORENCE, bending to stare into the widow of a equally small doll's house.

Florence is terrified. Her eye flicks to the other side of the tiny room and standing there behind her is the featureless doll of a small boy. Florence spins round in abject terror.

Again the merest hint of the child ghost is glimpsed dashing from the room back down the stairs with a small giggle. Florence is too stunned to follow.

74 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - DAY 74

Florence steps back into the upper corridor from the stairs and listens - her arm stretched out behind still holding the door knob.

After a deep breath she steps deliberately away from the door. We are level with he knob now and track her hand away so the door knob leaves frame. Then Florence's hand pauses. Florence steps backwards, as deliberately as before. The door knob is gone. So is the door, as her hand touches the plastered wall.

Florence's eyes close, trying to block out the findings of this mini-experiment. Without turning to look, she is suddenly away down the corridor.

75 INT. EMPTY DORM - DAY 75

Florence is on the bed, dressed but only carelessly - the order and control slipping. Hair still wet. She is alert, like someone who has just woken with a start. She sits up and looks around her, eventually finding the dolls - exactly like those in the dolls house - lined up on the window ledge.

She takes up the 'Florence' doll in her fingers and blinks in confusion, unsure what, if anything, she has just seen upstairs.

76 INT. SCHOOL DINING ROOM - DAY 76

We follow Florence - dressed and hair dry - at speed down the corridor and into the dining room. She finds Maud and Mallory and Tom is to one side, again like a loyal puppy at Maud's side. Florence is trying to find her certainty again but there is an anxiety to her now, like someone walking across an unsteady bridge.

FLORENCE
Robert, I need your help.

MAUD
You're not going?

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Mallory is confused by the suggestion that she is staying. He looks at her for confirmation. She provides it...

FLORENCE
Some of the equipment needs re-setting.

TOM
Can (I)...?

Maud is irritated that Tom is interrupting yet again and cuts Tom off with a sharp look.

MALLORY
I don't understand. You have your culprit. You're doing more?

Maud offers the sherry bottle to Florence.

FLORENCE
No thank you.

TOM
Don't you like sherry?

Again Maud darts a frustrated glance at Tom.

FLORENCE
(to group)
Need to keep my wits about me.

JUDD enters with a basket and his shotgun. Mallory, Maud and Florence watch him as he loads his covered plate into it. Tom can't or won't pass up the chance to talk to people.

TOM
I don't think I shall ever drink alcohol. It makes you cross and sick.

Maud is annoyed now and Tom knows it.

MAUD
Mr Judd, you not staying?

JUDD
(tapping his shotgun)
Things to do, Matron. Mallory.

Florence is on her way out.

FLORENCE
Mr Mallory?

Judd watches them leave, glances at Maud then leaves himself. As he does Maud turns on Tom.

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MAUD
Thomas, if you are to stay here, with these adults, you will behave accordingly. One of these days it will get you in serious trouble. Is that clear?

TOM
She likes talking to me. Anyway it's *Tom*!

MAUD
(snap)
Is that clear?
Very well.

Tom jumps down from the table.

77 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR & MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS 77

FLORENCE
I've set up some equipment down here, I'll do more upstairs.

They have reached the bottom of the stairs. On the floor of the hall is a ludicrously complicated network of trip-wires, a huge selection of measuring instruments and a gramophone recording device, which litter the corridor and stairs. This isn't just overkill, this is tinged with madness. The oil paintings stare down at them.

MALLORY
Florence, why are you doing this? This is (too much)...

FLORENCE
A, a collective delusion has been experienced here. I am merely explaining how a figure could be perceived to move through the house like there were no walls or floors.

Florence sees that Maud and Tom have followed them and are waiting a few meters back. Tom is watching the needle of one of the measuring instruments which stands by the wood panelled wall at the base of stairs. It flicks. Tom is the only one to notice.

Florence does not want to startle Tom so speaks more intimately to Mallory.

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FLORENCE (CONT'D)
You said a child was once murdered here, what if that was also *caused* by some condition common to...(the building)

MALLORY
You're doing this because of a *feeling*. Florence, this morning...

Florence's response drops the discreet tone to interrupt him. She is clinging to her rationale, as much to convince herself now as any of the others.

FLORENCE
(interrupting)
It's NOT a feeling. This is a thesis. It's science. Tell me about the original murder...

MALLORY
Florence, one can't be sure there even *was* a murder...

During this, Tom has seen the needle has flick again. Now it flicks for a third time, bigger than ever. Tom pulls at Maud's apron. Maud sees the needle too and interrupts Mallory.

MAUD
Florence.

Maud points; Florence and Mallory see the needle moving significantly.

MALLORY
What is it?

FLORENCE
Thermometer. Extremely sensitive. It means this side of the corridor has become, very *suddenly* become colder than that side.

The colder side is the wall at the base of the stairs. Florence approaches it. Tom is becoming even more anxious.

Florence hasn't take her eyes off the wall. She pulls at a piece of the vertical frame of the panelling, then another piece which gives then stiffly folds back. A latch is revealed which Florence presses and the whole panel - smaller than a door - opens. Florence crouches down. For the first time, although the others do not see it, she is frightened.

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FLORENCE (CONT'D)
You said it was a private house. Housemaids often had hidden cupboards for mops and brooms and such.
I can't see anything.

Cautious now, Florence is peering in. As she does Mallory carefully moves back, away from Florence to the doorway behind her. He opens the door wide. It seems a suspicious act.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
There may even be stairs to the upper floors.

Florence is fumbling in the dark. Her feet tread cautiously on the floorboards. Then her hands touch brick on two sides - the fourth side being the wood panel beside the first few steps of the main stairs.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Nothing.

Then Mallory turns on the light inside that room which spills light past Florence.

Inside the compartment, the light falls on the face of a Jumeau Bébé doll on a shelf inches from Florence's face. She jumps at the sight of the dead eyes staring right at her.

78 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 78

Florence emerges with the doll. It is ancient. Florence pulls the cord on her back and an eerie French song crackles from inside its body - the same tune played on the piano as Florence passed the music room.

DOLL
La coccinelle, la coccinelle,
s'envole à la maison,
votre maison est sur le feu et
vos enfants sont s'en allés,
tous sauf un...

This is all there is; the little voice crackles and disappears in the middle of the line. Tom shifts nervously, now someway back even from Maud.

FLORENCE
(pulls it again & translates)
'Ladybird, Ladydird, fly away home,
your house is on fire and your children are gone.
All except *one*...'

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On this last line, Tom's face crumples with fear as he runs to hide behind Maud.

Florence does not see this - her face too is betraying a fear we've not seen in her before. She is deeply confused; fear fighting to control of her. Mallory crouches beside her.

MALLORY
What? Are you sure you wish to do this?

Florence fights back.

FLORENCE
We need to work. We need to *work*. Lock the house.

MALLORY
Florence you don't need to...

FLORENCE
Robert. Lock the house!

She watches Mallory leave then sees Tom, still staring at the doll.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
(holding doll)
This means nothing, it is a silly nursery rhyme...

TOM
I'm frightened!

FLORENCE
Tom!

MAUD
Tom, no.

TOM (CONT'D)
He wants to get <u>me</u>!

FLORENCE
Tom nothing is going to happen to you. Nothing. I promise you that. Maud he doesn't need to be (here)...

Tom runs away frightened. Maud too is alarmed by Tom's mood and leaves after Tom.

Florence is summoning all her logic and rational beliefs to take control again. She pulls the cord again and once more the eerie, sad voice creeps out and fills the large corridor and stairwell. A door creaks in the draught. It seems as if the building is almost subtly responding to the sound of the doll's voice. A distant shotgun fires, causing Florence to jump.

As the song continues we approach from behind her. The needle flicks on the thermometer.

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The hairs on the back of Florence's neck rise. Another shotgun fires. It's probably only Judd outside but there is no escaping it, Florence Cathcart is scared.

She is alone now in the large space. She walks upstairs towards her temporary laboratory in the dormitory.

79 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 79

Florence reaches the top of the stairs and turns down the corridor; eyes down, studying the doll. She glances absent mindedly through an open doorway and inside the room beyond them is an OPULENT DRAWING ROOM, with heavy curtains, thick carpets, heavy furniture and blazing chandelier. The room is otherwise unremarkable and her preoccupation returns to the doll.

Then Maud's voice calls out from the bottom of the stairs.

MAUD
Florence. Florence?

Florence turns and goes back to the top of the stairs. As she does she passes the open doorway. This time through the doors an AUSTERE SCHOOL ROOM is all that can be seen. Florence does not notice this and reaches the top of the stairs.

FLORENCE
Maud?

MAUD
Tom will stay up there in the Games Room this afternoon, there's plenty to keep him occupied. Is that acceptable?

FLORENCE
Perfectly Maud, thank you.

Florence retraces her steps again. The door to the room is still open - the austere school room still visible.

80 INT. BACK DOOR OF SCHOOL - DAY 80

Mallory locks the back door and pauses to look out across the grounds. There is nothing out there but he seems now not to be looking. Instead he is thinking. He turns back and walks away.

81 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY 81

The school is quiet. The lawn is still. A bee buzzes from daisy to daisy.

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82 INT. MIDDLE LANDING - DAY 82

Florence is sitting among the numerous trip wires which cross the corridor. Connected to each is a tripod, camera and ignition tray. She is startled by Maud's voice.

MAUD
He is calmer now. Would you mind if he sits with you, just while you prepare?

Tom is peeping out of the doorway of the games room at the end of the corridor.

FLORENCE
Of course.

83 INT. DORMITORY - DAY 83

Mallory surveys the empty boxes of Florence's equipment. On the desk is a copy of her book "Seeing Through Ghosts". He holds it and considers it. Still puzzled.

84 INT. MIDDLE LANDING - DAY 84

Tom sits on the floor near Florence as she works.

TOM
I get in trouble for talking.

Florence smiles politely; too busy to pay real attention.

TOM (CONT'D)
But I don't talk much. Did you have lots of friends at school? *

FLORENCE
You can talk to me.

Tom considers this carefully, watching her all the time.

TOM
Mowa-zee...
(both acknowledge nick-name)
I have sort of imaginary friends.

FLORENCE
Oh there's nothing wrong with that. Many children do..I know I did. If you're lonely, it's perfectly natural.

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TOM
What was his name?

FLORENCE
I don't think he had one. Do yours have names?

TOM
You're still lonely aren't you?

This stops Florence in her tracks.

TOM (CONT'D)
I can tell. With the boys at school too, I can tell.
You had a real friend once and you don't anymore. You wish he was still with you. Did you love him or something?

Tom's innocent intuition has un-peeled Florence.

FLORENCE
Yes. I did love him. But I was very.. I did something very silly. And very cruel.

Below in the Main Hall, MALLORY enters. He can hear Florence continue with her story on the landing above so stops at the bottom of the stairs.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I was..I think I was frightened of losing him, I loved him so much. He was in the war.

TOM
What did you do?

She isn't sure he'll understand.

FLORENCE
I wrote to him and told him that I couldn't marry him and that I didn't love him anymore.

TOM
What did he say?

FLORENCE
He died. Not long after he got the letter.

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TOM
But you did love him. That's why you want him back.

Maud gives a little cough. She is further back but has been listening - for how long we don't know. She nods that Tom should go back to the games room.

Tom accepts this. He rises to leave but stops and crouches next to where Florence is kneeling. He hugs her and kisses her cheek.

TOM (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Thank you. Mowa-Zee.

Florence is moved by this. Maud watches him go.

MAUD
I don't think there's a place on earth people understand loneliness better than here.

Maud leaves now. Florence gets to her feet and goes downstairs.

85 INT. MAIN STAIRS & HALL - CONTINUOUS 85

Mallory is waiting for Florence at the foot of the stairs. He looks angry.

MALLORY
This is insanity. Listen to yourself. You talk about delusion, you don't want forgiveness. You want to torture yourself.

Florence doesn't wish to listen and walks on past him but he is following her.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Is <u>that</u> why you're doing this? Proving again and again he is gone. Stick the blade in deeper?

FLORENCE
(interrupting, biting back)
You tell me.

MALLORY
That's not justice it's (torture)...Then why? Why do this?

FLORENCE
Preaching to me while you rip your leg to shreds! As if that'll make those who *didn't* survive feel better! *

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Mallory is stung, frozen by this. Tears break into his eyes. *

MALLORY
You don't know what you're talking about.

She regrets her words and relents.

FLORENCE
Robert, I'm frightened. Things have happened, last night, then at the lake, upstairs. I am frightened. *

This is a huge admission for her but she gives up trying to explain what she saw.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Yes, my work comes at a price. I hate myself more and more and more. But I can't live with fear. I'd sooner be dead myself. *

She leaves Mallory.

86 INT. MIDDLE CORRIDOR & GAMES ROOM - DAY 86

Mallory walks past the entrance to the Games Room. He glances in. Sofas and tables, dart boards and a snooker table are scattered round the room, barely beginning to fill it.

At one low table in line with the door, Maud is sitting with Tom at a sofa and low table teaching him to play 'Patience'.

87 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 87

Mallory approaches and opens the door to his room. He closes gently after him. From the outside the room we can hear his voice inside.

MALLORY
(voice)
She's downstairs.

88 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 88

In a convex mirror, with a small camera pointing into it, we see Florence pass down the corridor.

The needle on a micro-barometer drops slowly.

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There is an open doorway that someone should step into - they do not.

The corridor is empty and we drift backwards down it. Florence sweeps into frame, walking away from us.

Florence steps over a trip wire as she turns into the library.

89 INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS 89

Florence is more fearful now but again tries to block it out with work. About the room stand six stands - like free-standing slender, weather vanes; magnetic detectors. Each is connected by a wire to a device with a measuring needle.

Each vane arm drifts, squeaking quietly as Florence crosses the room among them to the bulky single lens reflex camera which is on a tripod and pointed at the french doors. Her eye presses against the eyepiece. Through the camera, focus is set on the doors themselves but as she checks it again, rolling focus back and forward, as she pushes the focus out beyond the glass doors and for an instant the lawn in front of the school is sharp. There, stepping almost immediately out of sight behind the frame of the french doors is a CHILD. She leaps back in shock. Then over to the glass doors - nothing.

90 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY 90

Maud is still sitting on the sofa with Tom.

MAUD
And you can bring the black eight onto that red nine. And the red four onto the five.

We see them from the far end of the room. It is as if they too are now being watched.

MAUD (CONT'D)
Every card has its place. When they're back where they should be, you win the game. It takes time. That is why they call it Patience.

Back with them now, Tom is staring intently at the cards.

91 INT. LIBRARY - DAY (CONTINUED) 91

The magnetic vanes are still squeaking softly. They drift to and fro behind Florence as she checks the camera again.

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Then the squeaking of the weather vanes stops. She turns back to the room and freezes.

The vanes resume moving and squeaking gently; the momentary lull just a coincidence.

Florence bends to check a connection on the nearest vane and as she shifts position, we do also: and there, standing behind her against the wall, are the legs of a CHILD.

The legs step away. Florence is facing away from us now. Then there is a squeak. Florence turns and sees the globe, spinning slowly as if nudged.

Then one of the weather vanes spins slowly to point behind her. Then another. Then another. Florence spins and the globe by the door is turning as if nudged. Then there is the faintest GIGGLE.

FLORENCE
Tom? TOM!?

92 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 92

Maud, still on the sofa playing cards, turns her head as if she heard the shout.

Tom is beside her waiting for a reaction from Maud.

93 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR & MAIN HALL - DAY (CONTINUED) 93

Florence runs to the bottom of the stairs and stops. She senses the ghost is near.

FLORENCE
I know you're not a spirit. I know it's you Tom. And you have to stop this. I will not chase you.

There is no movement - waiting.

94 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 94

Silence, Maud listens. Finally...

MAUD
Keep playing.

Tom is patient beside her.

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95 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR & MAIN HALL - DAY (CONTINUED) 95

Florence is still. Suddenly there is a noise - a clack, clack, clack - Florence doesn't know what to do or how to react. Then it appears, a red billiard ball rolling slowly down the stone staircase. Clack-clack-clack. Florence runs up the stairs. *

96 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY 96

MAUD
(scanning cards)
That can't go there... *

97 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - DAY (CONTINUED) 97

Florence makes it to the top of the stairs, stepping over the web of wires, glancing down at the billiard ball which still clacks down the stairs. Then she looks down the upper corridor is halted in shock. *

Standing down the corridor isn't the child ghost but a man who we will later know as FREDDIE. He is dressed in a dinner suit and hanging down at his side is a shotgun. His face is bleached with a sickly pallor and he stares at Florence with bloodshot, hate-filled eyes.

Silence. Florence is terrified. Then the man begins to walk towards her. She instinctively backs away, faster, stumbling away from the man who is now raising his shotgun.

Suddenly there is a FLASH. Florence has stumbled through one of her own trip wires. Another FLASH. Another FLASH as she stumbles, blindly back, tripping from one flash to the next, still pursued by the man. Then she falls and shouts out.

FLORENCE *
No!

98 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 98

Maud is still standing, Tom is still seated but terrified.

MAUD
Florence!?

Maud and Tom run from the room.

99 INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 99

Maud and Tom burst out of the games room at the far end of the upper corridor.

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They both stop dead at the sight of Florence flat out on the floor, a swirling plume of smoke circles above her. Florence looks round and the man is gone. He should be above her now but is gone. Then she sees Tom and Maud.

FLORENCE
Why are you doing this?
(at Tom)
You! You nasty little boy.

TOM
I don't understand...

MAUD
Florence...

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I heard you giggle, I heard him giggle. He led me to the man! Who was he? Judd, was it Judd?

TOM
(looking to Maud)
What have I done wrong now?

FLORENCE
There was a man! It was just a man!

MAUD
Florence stop this...

FLORENCE
It's all of you. You're all part of this! You cruel and horrid little boy!

MAUD
Florence!

Florence is silenced. Her ranting accusations have been unconvincing, even to her. Then Tom summons the nerve...

TOM
I hate you. I hate the sight of you! *

The harshness of the word stuns Maud and Florence. Tom darts away upset.

MAUD
Thomas Hill you will come back here at once and apologise.

TOM
Stop bossing me round! I haven't done anything wrong!

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Tom flees. Maud is herself too upset to pursue it. Florence knows she has been terribly cruel and can barely understand what is going on. Moments pass as Maud studies her.

MAUD
I don't recognise you. I thought you were a kind, loving girl, but there's nothing left. You're a shell.

Florence can't argue.

100 INT. EMPTY DORM - DAY 100

Florence is turning a piece of equipment in her hands. Then, in a gesture of recognition at the futility of all these tricks, she tosses it to one side; useless.

On the window ledge, the dolls from the doll's house are still lined up. She picks up the one we saw used to 'represent' her. She considers it, looking at the tiny blank face.

Florence is at the window of the dormitory looking out. Her breath fogs a patch of the glass and she watches it clear to reveal her pale reflection. And again - fog then reveal, fog then reveal. Each time her face identity being lost in the fog, then emerging again...

101 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 101

The door opens a crack and suspicious Mallory answers, not willing to reveal too much of his room. Florence is there.

FLORENCE
I need your help. Now.

102 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY 102

Tom is alone at one of the large tables. We are behind him. We can hear tearful sniffs. He is exposed and isolated in this big space. We move slowly behind him. He jumps with a start at Maud's voice.

MAUD
There you are.

Maud puts her arm round him.

MAUD (CONT'D)
She is very troubled. You must understand that. She likes you very, very much.

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TOM
(meek & sad)
She doesn't care about me. I may as well be dead like Walter. I hate her.
I hate everyone here except you.

His face is a picture of hurt, Maud's a picture of worry.

103 INT. BLACKED OUT BUTLER'S PANTRY - DAY 103

Florence turns on the dim light in the make-shift dark room. Mallory is dressed in only his shirt and trousers. Florence is clinging the last threads of her convictions.

FLORENCE
He had a shotgun. And he was there. And you're going to help me prove it.
(pointing to camera plates)
One at a time, in here. I'll change the paper.

Mallory seems ready. The dim light shines in Florence's now obsessive eyes. He studies them without her noticing. Florence reaches for the light switch.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
(awkward)
I can leave a red light on but otherwise... Are you...?

MALLORY
Please (I'll be fine).

Florence turns the white light out and it is replaced by an even dimmer red light. In this light only the vaguest movement is visible. Mallory places a sheet, Florence fits the first plate and CLICK.... The white spill of the projector lights them both creating an intimate halo round them. Mallory is standing close to Florence now. The projector goes off and again the room is bathed only in dim red light.

This process continues as they talk and work, dim red light, white projector spill, dim red light. Each time Mallory and Florence catch one another's eyes, moving closer and closer together. When they speak their voices are quiet...an awkward intimacy and a growing sexual tension.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
The dark used to bother me. But it came to mean safety, no shells, snipers.
When I was a lad I'd huddle in my bed, wanting to see but too frightened to open my eyes.

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A careful tone creeps into Mallory's voice, like an emerging purpose to his words beyond idle chatter.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
It's never darker than when you close your eyes and yet we keep them shut. Why is that?

The projecting is finished. Florence moves the sheets from tray to tray. On the succession of sheets, lit only by the dim red light, In one shot, Florence can be seen, tripping and stumbling in the glare of the close flash.

FLORENCE
(moving to the trays)
The motion's not blurred, even if he was moving, one of these plates'll have him clearly.

As the other images develop, Mallory continues...

MALLORY
Perhaps if I'd opened my eyes I'd have seen through the darkness. Grown accustomed to it. Seen for myself if demons were looking back at me after all.

None of the images have captured enough of the corridor to reveal the dinner suited man. Finally in the last image, Florence is lying on the floor looking up at the space above her, perfect framing to catch where the man should be standing. He is gone.

Florence is speechless. Mallory sees the image too and now only watches Florence.

FLORENCE
Where is he?

MALLORY
Why do you keep your eyes closed Florence?

MALLORY (CONT'D)
You've been frightened all your life. You use all this (kit) to shut your eyes and pray that the terror would go away. But it didn't go away Florence, it's with you right now. *

She looks closer at the image and not only is the man missing, but down at the end of the corridor as if watching Florence's ordeal, is the ghost child. Clear, unequivocal. Mallory has still not stopped looking at her...

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FLORENCE
(looking at paper)
Oh god no.

MALLORY
It is with you right now.

On the new print is the unmistakable blurred, tragic face of the child ghost, staring down the corridor towards the camera. Florence is repelled by the sight but also rising in her is a kind of delight.

FLORENCE
No. No. This is everything I've...

She is breathing heavily, trying to smother a smile of relief.

MALLORY
You need to see ghosts Florence. More than anyone I've known you want to see.

Florence is fighting with the elation that has overcome her - as unwelcome as it is thrilling. All the pain she suffered from the certainty that death is final, is reversing inside her.

She steps back. And there in the dim light is Mallory, staring at her. Slowly Florence's euphoria of discovery turns into an erotic charge.

She is confused as she approaches him, not sure of what she wants to do next. When their lips touch something inside them collapses further. She pulls away and looks at him. Slowly her hand goes to his thigh. He is close to pulling away but she '*shushes*' calmly, gently until her hand is resting softly on his injured thigh. Mallory is overwhelmed and they kiss again. *

They fall back onto a battered sofa under the window, as they do it pulls the blanket from the window and daylight tumbles into the room.

As the light hits the paper, the image of the ghost child fades before our eyes, but neither Mallory nor Florence care. And soon, she is pulling Mallory into her.

104 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY 104

Maud leads a forlorn Tom in. She sits and can say nothing as she watches him make his way absent mindedly across the room, flicking a ball on the billiard table.

Eventually he picks up a dart and hurls it at the darts board. It lands with a heavy THUNK>>

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105 INT. BLACKED OUT BUTLER'S PANTRY - DAY 105

Mallory and Florence's lovemaking is only just this second over. Their faces and mouths are together as they pant breathlessly. Shock and disbelief.

FLORENCE
You're not him. Are you?

MALLORY
I'm not him.

He smiles a rare smile and it transforms his hard face.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Are you you?

His smile broadens into a happy laugh which she inherits. He rolls over to lie beside her. But almost at once they are cut off by a ringing bell. On the wall above them is the old servant's bells box: the "Portico Room" label is swinging.

This sight lances Mallory and he flinches. His hand goes to his leg wound and he is quickly onto his feet.

FLORENCE
What?

MALLORY
I should go. I need to go.

FLORENCE
Robert? What is it? What's that ringing? Don't leave.

He is gone. The ringing will not stop.

106 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY 106

Maud can hear the bell too. Tom is now the far end of the room by the table tennis table. The bells die down.

MAUD
Wait here, Tom. Do not leave this room.

Maud leaves. Tom picks up a table tennis bat and ball and, with one end of the table folded up vertically, he begins to play.

107 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 107

Maud makes her way slowly down the corridor as the CLACK-CLOCK-CLACK of the table tennis echoes round the empty building.

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MAUD
Is anyone there? Hello?

Behind her now, as she moves cautiously into the LIBRARY.

108 INT. GARRET CORRIDOR AND MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 108

Mallory limps to his door on which reads a small sign "Portico Room". He closes it behind him. As he leans his back against the door his face drops.

MALLORY
It wasn't you ringing.

Panic creeps over his face as he turns quickly back to the door. It is locked.

109 INT. BLACKED OUT BUTLER'S PANTRY - DAY 109

Florence cannot hear the table tennis and lies back on the sofa in silence. She looks at the impression made in the cushion by Mallory's head. An invisible lover lying beside her.

Then after a moment, a contorted face of a child snaps out through the soft fabric of the cushion at her. Its mouth open in a silent scream. But Florence does scream, in anger. She attacks the cushion, ripping at it, furious.

FLORENCE
No, No!

Feathers scatter into the air and hang round her. Robbed of a rare moment of happiness, she is distraught.

Then in the mess of feathers between her knees lies the silver cigarette case she dropped in the lake. Inside, the cigarettes are lined up neatly - and dry. Florence is trying to hold it together. She stumbles to her feet, suddenly desperate to get out of the room, the house, desperate to escape.

110 INT. MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 110

Mallory shoulder charges it in growing panic but it won't budge.

111 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 111

Tom hits the ball against the vertical table. The ball bounces back. He hits it again and the balls bounces back.

Then ball misfires and bounces away...

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112 INT. MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 112

Mallory is still locked in.

MALLORY
Florence!!

113 INT. BACK DOOR OF SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS 113

Florence flings open the locks of the door and heads out on to the grounds.

114 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 114

Maud comes down the corridor and stops at the door of the butler's pantry. Feathers lie everywhere. She takes a while to realise what this means and hurries from the room.

115 INT. MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 115

Mallory is crashing now into the doors as hard as he can.

116 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED) 116

Tom is still playing his game. The house around him receives the sound - CLACK-CLOCK-CLACK - and seems to double it, triple it with tiny echoes. Maud hurries by the room.

MAUD
Have you left this room? Something has happened to Florence. Stay here. Promise me you will stay here.

TOM
Alright.

MAUD
Tom!

TOM
I promise!

Maud leaves. Tom, resumes his game more petulant than ever.

117 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY 117

Florence fumbles to light a cigarette, still animated.

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JUDD
I saw you.

Judd steps out from the trees.

JUDD (CONT'D)
I saw you with him. The war hero.

FLORENCE
I don't...

JUDD
I've seen plenty through these windows making my rounds but never that. I knew you weren't here for no dead lad with a bear under his arm. But I never thought you were looking for that.

Florence drops her cigarette and walks away from Judd's game. Then through her exhaustion something strikes her...

FLORENCE
'Under his arm'. 'Dead lad with a bear under his arm'?

JUDD
What you talking about?

FLORENCE
How could you know? I found the bear's eye outside so it was out there before he died but only someone who saw him die would know that. Someone 'making his rounds'...

JUDD
You take care of what you're saying...

FLORENCE
That's why no one heard him scream, you held his mouth. While he died of fright in your arms... and McNair covered for you.

She sees it coming but cannot move fast enough; Judd punches Florence in the face with all the force of a boxer. She crumples to the ground. She has dropped the cigarette case and Judd retrieves it for himself.

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JUDD
What? You think I wouldn't protect a man like that? What he's been through?

~ In the GAMES ROOM Tom bats the ball to and fro. Now it is getting faster.

~ Crash, crash, Crash, Mallory charges the door.

She is dazed, blood flowing from her nose as Judd paces round her. He grabs her ankle and drags her towards the cover of the trees, she struggles hopelessly.

JUDD (CONT'D)
Told you it's the living who you want to watch, not the dead.

~ In the GAMES ROOM, Tom is attacking the ball, becoming more and more frantic. In his cell Mallory is in a frenzy.

Judd throws her to the ground, clearly preparing to sexually assault her. She tries to crawl away.

FLORENCE
Not this. Please. It's all I have. *

Judd kicks her in the ribs with full force. Then Florence looks up at Judd standing above her. Something breaks inside her.

By the time Florence's body strikes Judd, she is like a animal. Arms whirl, fists at his face. He lands his own punches and slams her against a tree but she is unstoppable. The violence is un-tethered and brutal. And during the fight we have heard her repeating the garbled words...

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Not this.

Finally Judd lifts her on his shoulder and crashes her against a * trunk. She falls still, semi-consciousness. *

118 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - DAY 118

Mallory finally smashes through the door and is free. *

119 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY (CONTINUED) 119

Judd's own rage turning to bitterness he presses her down, holding her arms in place. Florence can see the trees above her, swaying, unaware of the violence that is being committed below.

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Judd is mounting her in subdued silence. But then out of Florence's line of vision, inches from Judd's face the blurred and contorted face of the CHILD GHOST snaps into view. Judd shrieks and dives back. *

Judd scrabbles back, looking round for the ghost that has immediately vanished. He is turning, looking, screaming. Then he is silenced... *

Florence has struck him in the face with the butt of his shot gun, swung by the barrel. Florence is not aware of why Judd leapt off her. Blood covers her face from the fight. She turns and runs. *

As she flees, she looks back and is halted. Standing beyond a barely conscious Judd, is the Ghost Child looking back at her. Unsure of what she has seen, frightened by what she has seen she continues to run on. *

Florence is gone. Judd is fumbling in the undergrowth. He looks up and standing close to his bleeding face are the legs of the ghost child. And then there is a noise; like the collected distant, contorted screams of children. The noise gets sharper and sharper - more and more angry. Judd fumbles for his shot gun, pointing it up at the child. The noise is building and building. *

120 EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE, ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - DAY 120

Still filthy an covered in blood, Florence is running back towards the school. Far behind her there is a gunshot. *

FLORENCE
ROBERT!!! ROBERT!!!

She reaches the front door and begins banging on it.

A terrified and upset Maud arrives and opens the door to her.

MAUD
Oh my dear, whatever happened.
Oh Florence my darling girl.

FLORENCE
I need to see Robert!

There is a moment when it seems Mallory will never arrive.

Finally he does.

MALLORY
Florence. Oh God, Florence.

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FLORENCE
He attacked me, Judd. He helped kill Walter. He tried to rape me.

Maud is stunned.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I saw it, the ghost. It was there...

Maud looks truly horrified. Mallory snaps her out of it.

MALLORY
Maud, Maud! Get a blanket and prepare a bath. And get her some fresh clothes. Now please.

Maud does not need to be asked twice and dashes into the house.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Where?

FLORENCE
In the trees off from the drive. He's bleeding.

MALLORY
Stay here. Get to Maud and stay with her. Hear me?

Mallory is off across the gravel towards the driveway. Florence calls after him.

FLORENCE
Robert. Robert, don't tell Tom. He's frightened enough.

Mallory waits to deal with her concern but is more eager to get to find Judd.

MALLORY
Tom?

FLORENCE
Little Tom, he's frightened enough. The only child here.

MALLORY
Florence, there are no children here. It's just the three of us. Now please get inside, I'll be back soon.

Florence has barely heard his last words. Her world spins on its axis. Mallory has turned and is on his way as she stumbles back from the outside world into the heart of Rookwood School.

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121 INT. MAIN ENTRANCE, ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS 121

Florence is only just standing. Then from inside the house, from the direction of the library, the tap-scratching of chalk on blackboard.

FLORENCE
Tom? Tom?

122 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY 122

Mallory is searching the grounds. Nothing. *

Then as he runs deeper he glances over across the lake. Right * out in the very centre, floating face down on totally calm water * is the body of Judd. *

123 INT. LIBRARY - DAY (CONTINUED) 123

Florence reaches the entrance to the library. The scratching has stopped and now on the blackboard “YOU KNOW WHERE”.

FLORENCE
Yes.

Florence is numb and shivering now. Almost in a trance she goes over to the paneled wall where she saw the engraved image of the mouse with a curled tail the day she arrived. She seems to know the panel will lift out and it does. Behind it is a latch that releases the hidden door.

Stretching out below her are steps down into a cellar. She steps down into the darkness.

124 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY (CONTINUED) 124

Mallory is in the lake, dragging Judd toward the bank. But when * rolls him over, he is revolted by what he sees. We only glimpse * the extent of injury to Judd’s face but Mallory recoils. Clearly * something extreme has happened to Judd. *

MALLORY *
My God. Dear God *

Mallory tries again and in a moment of utter turmoil and pain - * reliving some hellish events from his recent past - he summons * the nerve to lift the body out of the water and carry it towards * the woods. *

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125 INT. CELLAR - DAY (CONTINUED) 125 *

Florence emerges into the deep, dusty cellar. It is filled with domestic memorabilia of a family long gone.

A stuffed pheasant in a case. A rocking horse- actually a rocking cow. An iron bedsteads with rusted, broken springs. Stacked oils of fusty, terrifying ancestors.

She sees a framed photograph propped up on a tea chest. A po-faced man with a handlebar moustache and his thin-faced wife stare back in wedded misery, a child huddled between them.

On an armoire covered in cobwebs, a collection of dolls. Glass eyes watching Florence.

Inside the glass case is a weird TAXIDERMY DISPLAY -- a bizarre BEATRIX POTTER-LIKE TABLEAU featuring a stuffed kitten dressed like a Victorian farmer's wife, standing on two legs, brandishing a carving knife. Three stuffed, blind mice, their tails been cut off, blood red paint on the kitchen table.

We watch Florence from behind as she turns and freezes. Across the cellar is the massive doll's house replica of Rookwood School.

Defeated, at the end of the road, her head drops in submission. She fully expects the voice which chimes behind her.

TOM
I didn't mean to scare Walter.

FLORENCE
I know. I believe you.

Florence turns and is not surprised to see the blurred face of the GHOST CHILD hiding between the open cellar steps. It watches her but she is too far gone to fear it. It passes behind the structure of the stair and emerges: TOM'S FACE IS CLEAR.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
You control that?

TOM
Sometimes I can. But why could he see me? No one sees me. I can't make them.

FLORENCE
We see what we need to. He needed a friend.

TOM
(choked whisper)
So did I.

Florence sees the Tom is a *deeply* traumatised little boy, confused, hollowed out.

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TOM (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to hurt anyone.
Except Mr Judd.
(suddenly tearful)
There's not as much blood in the books.

FLORENCE
Oh Tom.

She takes the traumatised little lad in her arms, soothing him.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
You said 'he' was going to get you. When you heard the doll music you said that. Who is 'he'? Judd? Was that Judd or Mr Mallory?
Who were you frightened of?

Tom looks up at his friend.

TOM
I can't tell you.

FLORENCE
Why not?

TOM
I'm allowed to help you, but you have to see for yourself. That's the only way we can be together...again.

This last word stuns Florence, once again the world spins.

FLORENCE
What?

TOM
Promise you won't go away again. Mou-sie.

She flinches almost in pain at the recognition of what he is saying and how the nick-name resembles 'Mowa-zee'.

FLORENCE
(vague recollection)
Mow-see.

TOM
Promise we'll be friends again.

FLORENCE
(pushing him away)
No. No.

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TOM
You started to remember. You started and I've made a new house,
(points to doll's house)
to remember more. You started to remember, I know you did!

TOM (CONT'D)
Look at it! You'll remember the rest. For yourself. Look at the house, it's all there!

FLORENCE
He didn't have a name. No, no I don't want to look! Get away from me!

Tom is horrified, he darts away up the stairs. Florence's eye settles on the photograph propped up on the tea chest - the po-faced husband and wife (we later know them as FREDDIE and CONSTANCE STRICKLAND). Each has their hand on the shoulder of a little girl who looks right into camera. Florence's face crumples with horror as she looks closer - deep into the blank face of the little girl.

Reeling away from the photo Florence turns to the doll's house and flings open the side. Inside, the rooms are no longer those of a boy's school but the lavishly decorated home of an Edwardian family.

Curtains, oil paintings, furniture, servants coming and going upstairs, the kitchen staff busy.

We see the oil paintings on the tiny walls then the exact same paintings laid to one side in the cellar behind Florence.

Florence looks in a small upstairs room of the doll's house, in which miniatures of Tom and Child Florence are covered in black dust, surrounded by tiny bags of 'coal'. In the doorway a miniature NANNY.

126 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY 126

Year 1901.

The laundry room - where Florence found the sheer mask - is now a COAL AND WOOD STORE, just as it is in the doll's house in the cellar.

In the middle of a pile of coal sits Child Florence, screaming with laughter at Tom who runs round the room, also covered in dust, leaving black foot prints on the floor.

We are behind a young NANNY who has walked in and found them - we do not see her face.

~ We see again Adult Florence seeing the black footprints mingling with the white ones on the floor of the laundry room. And on the door of that room, "Housemaid Store".

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TOM
(voice)
You started to remember, I know you did.

~ Florence walking past the opulent room, earlier.

~ The red crayon drawing on the floor of the bursar's office - a child being attacked by a wolf.

127 INT. DOLL'S HOUSE - DAY 127

Back in the Cellar, with Tom's words in her ears, Florence looks hurriedly to a room in the doll's house just like the one she walked past, to one of the bedrooms...

A child doll is under the bed, a woman doll, white dress & red sash, with a bare back and a man with a stick.

Florence can see the 'Child Florence' doll under the bed...

128 INT. LAVISH BEDROOM - NIGHT 128

Year 1901: Under the bed, Child Florence has clearly been disturbed while doing a drawing in wax crayon on the floor boards.

CONSTANCE is by the fireside in a white dress with scarlet sash facing the fire. Up steps FREDDIE with a riding crop. She drops her dress obediently to expose her naked back. There are clear signs of scars.

As the fresh whipping begins, Constance turns and through tear drenched eyes notices Child Florence, also crying.

129 INT. CELLAR - DAY 129

Back in the cellar, Florence hears a man's voice shouting. It is coming from the library at the top of the steps; the familiar shouting voice she has heard before, using words Tom used earlier in the day at Florence...

FREDDIE
(OS)
Get out of my sight. I hate you. I hate the sight of you! *

Florence jolts as her eyes flick down to the library of the doll's house where a man in a dinner suit is standing pointing at the woman in her pretty white dress. The voices continue...

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CONSTANCE
(voice)
You hate everyone! You hate me. You hate her. Why? *

FREDDIE
Be quiet! *

Florence realises that the scenario in the doll's house is being played out above her - upstairs in the SCHOOL LIBRARY.

Florence runs up the steps to crouch at the secret door. Sure enough, the scene she just saw in the doll's house is being played out by human beings...

130 INT. OLDHAM HALL LIBRARY - DAY 130

Freddie is in his dinner suit, Constance in a white evening dress. Both are drunk. These are long-fractured people.

As the argument grows, FLORENCE watches through the crack in the panel. But as she moves in and out of the crack of light, we seamlessly intercut between ADULT FLORENCE and CHILD FLORENCE.

Both are petrified, both looking at the same painful scene unfold in the Library. Freddie is shouting - just as Florence has heard him shout twice during her time in the school...

FREDDIE
Be quiet! You will be quiet or so help me!

CONSTANCE
I'll tell you why. Because she's not a son. She is bright and kind and sweet but this * bloodline and its *fucking* sons!

FREDDIE
I need a son!

CONSTANCE
You HAVE one!

This silences Freddie's. *

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
You think we don't know? That boy she plays with. You think the servants don't know he's a Strickland bastard, Freddie! Why else would you keep him here? Your *bastard* child!!

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Freddie throws his brandy glass to the floor; leaving a puddle the parquet floor and broken glass against the skirting board.

Through the crack in the panel Florence can see Freddie lift a shot gun off the desk. As he does, she sees a red billiard ball roll off his desk to the floor. He stands holding the gun *just as he was* when Florence saw him in the upper corridor. *

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
By a *servant*! *

FREDDIE
Don't talk about him. He is...Tom is my heir... *

CONSTANCE
You think they don't all say there goes sweet Florence and her bastard companion... *
You're a laughing stock...

Constance is ripped backwards by the shot gun blast. Spare balls of shot punch tiny holes in the panel which Florence is hiding behind as Constance's body crashes out of sight.

FLORENCE
Mummy!

CHILD FLORENCE bursts out through the small door into the room to stand between her mother and Freddie.

FREDDIE
Oh, sweetheart. Mousie darling I've made a terrible mess. I... I need you to move out of the way. Go to your room.

Child Florence is terrified but does not move.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Mousie darling. Move out of the way.
(suddenly shouting)
MOVE OUT OF THE WAY!!

FLORENCE
(adult)
NO!!

With this shout, ADULT FLORENCE has burst up into the room.

Freddie has raised the shot gun again - it is now inches from CHILD FLORENCE'S pale, teary face.

FREDDIE
Now Florence! Or so help me..!

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ADULT FLORENCE stands looking at this sight and cannot face it - backing away in horror she bursts through the doors behind her into...

NOW BEGINS A SEQUENCE WHERE FLORENCE LEAVES THE ROOM ONLY TO ENTER THE SAME SCENE AGAIN...Child Florence standing before her father's gun.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
You will obey me now! You will obey me now!

REPEAT.

REPEAT.

REPEAT. But Florence cannot escape. Finally...

CONSTANCE
(dying)
Mousie.... Mousie Run!

As the child turns to see her mother, Freddie steps forward, pushing the muzzle beyond her.

ADULT FLORENCE
No!

As her words come out, Freddie discharges the second barrel and Constance is ripped to pieces.

As Freddie reaches for the box of cartridges Child Florence runs for the panel and it slams behind her.

DURING THE FOLLOWING CHASE, we again use the patches of darkness to intercut between ADULT and CHILD 'FLORENCE'. Both chased by the same father.

'FLORENCE' runs down through the cellar, but above on the ground floor Freddie follows her, occasionally firing through the floorboards. As he goes...

FREDDIE
Think I don't know your little hiding places? Know where my little mouse hides herself for hours on end?

131 INT. MAIN STAIRS & CELLAR - CONTINUOUS 131

Freddie is into the Main Hall. We are still intercutting between Adult and Child 'FLORENCE' as she reaches the end of the cellar and has nowhere to turn.

Above her, Freddie is listening out for her scampering. Florence hears his every word.

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FREDDIE
Little Mousie? I really am sorry Little Mousie. I will find you darling. You have to go with mummy now.

BOOM - another shot into the floor. 'FLORENCE' can't stay there.

She climbs up another small set of steps into a compartment. It is the same compartment where she found THE FRENCH DOLL earlier.

The French Doll is there this time too 'FLORENCE' picks it up.

Then 'FLORENCE' looks up to discover that TOM is there with her, already hiding in the compartment. Tom raises his finger meekly to his lips in a silent "Sshh".

Silence in the Hall.

'FLORENCE' does not move. Tears. Terror. Stretched tension.

Then splitting the silence..

DOLL
La coccinelle, la coccinelle, s'envole à la maison,...
(continues)

'FLORENCE' whimpers, horrified that she has squeezed too tight.

BOOM. Freddie has fried into the panel beside where Florence is crouched. The wood splinters, and blood erupts from her neck.

The adult Florence struggles to pull open her top and the scars we saw on her throat are open fresh lacerations of glancing buckshot.

The doll's voice continues in what has become a moment of peace.

Freddie stands as if in sublime ecstacy at the sound of the little french doll. There is a squeak and Freddie turns. Then horror crosses his face...

The hatch to Florence's compartment is open. TOM's little body is lying in view on the tiles of the hall. His night shirt and body is blooded and shredded by gun shot, children's playing cards have spilled from his hand.

Freddie's face collapses with horror at what he has done.

The doll has stopped.

Freddie walks lost to the stairs and begins to climb them. His voice now pathetic, feeble.

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FREDDIE
Mousie.
Mousie.
Little Mousie.

Child Florence and Adult Florence are now SEPARATE; one still trapped in the terror, the other outside it.

Adult Florence is out of the cupboard, at the bottom of the stairs, watching her father.

Through the crack in the wood Child Florence blankly watches Freddie stop half way up the return flight of stairs, above him is a painting: the George Stubbs painting "Lion attacking Horse".

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
(slurring now)
Mouzie. Mou-zie.

Child Florence seems not to hear her nickname being called out.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
All the children are gone.
All except one.

He places the barrel in his mouth and is gone.

Adult Florence makes no reaction. Child Florence stares blankly out through the crack. She also saw her father's last moment but now where her father stood, all she sees are the angry jaws and wild eyes of the Lion.

132 INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS 132

Adult Florence is standing calmly looking at the body of her mother, blown against the wooden panelling.

133 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 133

Adult Florence is watching as 1901 servants rush past her towards the Main Stairs.

134 INT. MAIN STAIRS - DAY 134

Florence watches as servants help Child Florence from her hiding place. There is nothing behind the little girl's eyes.

A faceless Nanny is bent over the bloodied body of Tom; wailing a silent wail. A card falls from Tom's fingers onto the floor beside her: an illustration of a PARROT WEARING A TOP HAT, that Maud had in her Bible.

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Florence is sitting beside her child-self on the bottom stair. One of them is lost. The other has found herself. Then a voice distracts Adult Florence...

MAUD
You never said 'school'.

Maud is standing in the empty Main Hall of Rookwood School...

CUT TO:

135 INT. MAIN ENTRANCE, ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - EVENING 135

...We are back in what is now the main entrance hall at Rookwood, the night Florence was attacked by Judd. Maud is some way from Florence. Tears are in her eyes, suffering her own shock and upset; a kind woman exhausted and broken with worry and care.

MAUD
From the moment you arrived you called this place a 'house'.

FLORENCE
You...

MAUD
I never meant it to get this far. Attacked by that dreadful man. And now dear Tom a killer.

FLORENCE
(numb, remembering)
Nanny.

MAUD
I knew you remembered nothing of it. I thought getting you here would be enough. The house... But you didn't remember me let alone the terrible things.
One thing kept me certain. You saw him. Saw Tom and spoke to him when no others could. Not Mr Mallory, the other children... The second you arrived you saw that darling murdered boy who's lived all these years with friends he could never have.

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Maud once seemed simple and even foolish but her every word and action since Florence arrived now has radically different meaning. And she knows it.

MAUD (CONT'D)
I knew the loneliest boys might start to see him but whatever I said, he refused to hide. Poor Walter's death left me no choice. He needed *you*.

FLORENCE
But you're his mother.

MAUD
I was your mother too in all but name. Wet nursed you. Raised you and watched you taken away. Adopted by your Aunt.

Emotion now overcomes Maud and again another side to her appears - a woman possessed by grief and despair.

MAUD (CONT'D)
I never asked anything of the world. Knew my place, I knew your father would never marry me.
But it's a perfect hell on earth; to give a woman children to love and to rob her of them.
At night I still feel your little bodies in my arms.

Florence is now too fighting tears as she stands and walks into Maud's embrace.

MAUD (CONT'D)
I knew you felt it too. We love you Florence, more than life itself.

Maud is lost in happiness. It is the end of a journey for them both.

Over Maud's shoulder Florence sees Mallory, standing in the front doorway, filthy and shaking from shock.

FLORENCE
Robert.

Florence goes to him. Holds him. And silence fills the house.

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136 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - SUNSET 136

Pink and white clouds float on the calm lake.

137 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 137

Time has passed - time enough for Florence to have explained everything to Mallory. The mood is quiet now.

Florence is drinking tea. Mallory sits opposite; an attempt has been made to wipe the blood and mud off him.

FLORENCE
And my adoptive parents must have... *
(shaking head)
'Eaten by lions'.

Florence shakes her head, knowing that it now sounds foolish.

MALLORY
All memories are a hoax of some sort. You can't blame them for leaving you to believe that one.

Pause. He pushes the silver cigarette case across the table.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
He's five feet down, maybe more. People will assume he's on the run for Walter's death.

Mallory sees gratitude fill her face and gently dismisses it...

MALLORY (CONT'D)
I've mourned *decent* men... (Besides) the defence of 'he was trying to rape me' wouldn't do you much good. May as well say a ghost from your childhood did it.

She sniffs with laughter at this. Then the humour fades.

FLORENCE
You see your own ghosts.
(Mallory eventually nods)
Are they with us now?

Again, Mallory gives the tiniest of nods. The room is empty. They both speak so quietly now. So intimate as if a word too harsh would break something.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Your friends.

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MALLORY
They look like my friends.

Through the partially open door, we see that Maud is about to enter. She is terribly happy but she can tell the conversation is sensitive and politely waits outside.

Florence reaches across the table and takes Mallory's hand.

FLORENCE
They don't have the right. No amount of guilt deserves the pain you *inflict* on yourself.

MALLORY
They died. I lived.

FLORENCE
No you didn't.

Florence has deliberately broken the quietness.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Is living with ghosts really living?

Florence taps her cigarette ash into a pot. When she is not looking, Mallory looks darkly at her. Maud enters with a sherry bottle and a huge grin.

MAUD
I'll light a fire. Get some glasses.

Florence and Mallory politely pretend the intrusion is welcome. Then Florence sees a timid Tom standing in the doorway.

FLORENCE
Robert. I wonder if <u>we</u> could have a few moments...?

Mallory takes this in and understands. He begins to leave. There is silence in the room as Tom and Florence look at each other. Finally, in tiny voices...

TOM
I'm sorry.

FLORENCE
So am I. I didn't mean to start the doll.

TOM
It doesn't matter now.

Mallory can see Florence from through the doorway. He steps away.

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Both Florence and Tom are unsure what to say, what to do. Maud has poured the sherry. Tom moves to the table and in a gesture of friendship, he carefully carries one to Florence.

FLORENCE
Someone once told me it makes one cross and sick.

Tom smiles. Florence smiles. Maud and Florence drink. But when Florence lowers her glass, Tom still looks at it, unsmiling.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Tom, what's the matter?
Tom?

TOM
Mother said it would be alright. She said you would want us to.

Florence looks at Maud in confusion. Maud smiles back. Her love and warmth does not slip for a second; as if everything she does is out of genuine love and kindness.

MAUD
Why do you think I sent Tom out those times to make you stay here. Because I know what's best for you. I always did.

FLORENCE
Maud, I'm going home to...

Maud's eyes drift; the poison in her drained glass acting fast.

MAUD
Everyone 'has their place', where they are meant to be. I'm so sorry Florence. But you need to be with Tom, forever. 'Maud knows best'.

Florence turns to Tom who is confused and upset. Looking at her own half finished glass, everything dawns on Florence.

FLORENCE
Robert!!

The poison is beginning to blur Maud's mind. Mallory comes through the door.

MAUD
Mr Mallory, Florence and I will be leaving now. Tom wants his family with him.

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MALLORY
Florence? Florence! *

Tom is still upset. Florence's body is also now starting to react. Maud sits carefully on the floor, against the wall so she can see Florence. Florence's mind is racing for a way out. *

FLORENCE *
The medicine cabinet. It'll be in Maud's room. Something to make me sick.

MALLORY
Oh god, no, please no.

FLORENCE
Now!!

Mallory is up and running. Florence rolls back onto the flag stone floor of the large kitchen. Maud has not passed out yet, her eyes still open, watching, a smile still brushing her lips.

MAUD
I never dreamed a woman like me could be this happy.

138 INT. MAIN STAIRS - CONTINUOUS 138

Mallory bounds up the stairs. Towards the third floor. But as he * does, his injured leg gives way under him. He tries to continue * but is in extreme pain. *

139 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUED) 139

Florence is weakening. Her eyes are losing focus and direction.

FLORENCE
Tom. Tom.

TOM
Don't be angry. I just miss you. All the time.

FLORENCE
Tom, I have never been happy. Not one second of my life since you left me. You know what that feels like, don't you?

Tom takes her hand and presses it to his lips.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
But I can't come.

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On this, Tom's kisses her hand harder, tears well from his eyes.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
You are the only friend I have ever had. But if I go with you my soul will never be happy. I can be happy *here*, now, thanks to <u>you</u>.

Tom is a lost and lonely child and knows he is being abandoned. Florence's tears only make his own flow stronger. Maud is motionless, her glassy eyes watching her beloved children huddled together.

TOM
But you won't need me, no one will need me.

FLORENCE
Maud will need you Tom. She'll always need you.

TOM
Where will I go?

FLORENCE
I don't know Tom.

TOM
When will I see you?

FLORENCE
I don't know. I don't know.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MALLORY'S ROOM - NIGHT *

Mallory is limping badly towards Maud's room. His progress is greatly slowed by his injury. * *

140 INT. MAUD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 140

Mallory bursts into the dark room, hobbling. He breaks open the medicine cabinet. Looking for anything which might work. Nothing. Blood is seeping through his trousers on his thigh. Suddenly he is shouting out to unseen people. * * * *

MALLORY
Do something! Please! She's...

Mallory tails off. His ghosts do nothing. Say nothing.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
God damn you.

Still in pain he hobbles from the room. *

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141 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUED) 141

FLORENCE
Tom. I need you now. Can you move through this house, like there are no walls?

TOM
No walls and no floors. *

FLORENCE
(weak whisper) *
Then fly. Fly little Tom.

She pulls his ear close to her lips and mutters a last breath. Sensing she is leaving Tom screams and explodes from the space.

142 INT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS 142

Tom passes like a breath up through the house...

143 INT. MAIN STAIRS - NIGHT (CONTINUED) 143

Mallory is running along the top corridor and down the stairs.

144 INT. MALLORY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 144

Tom is at the table beside Mallory's bed, the draw opens and the bottle of 'ZINC SULPHATE - Astringent, Emetic', which Mallory rubbed on his leg, is into his hand. Then he is away... *

145 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 145

In Tom's hand, the Zinc Sulphate bottle touches Florence's lips. * Florence throws up to one side and rolls back to face Tom. He is holding her hand again. Maud's face has not changed - we have no idea if her fixed eyes are seeing this or not.

TOM
Are you dead? Are you dying?

FLORENCE
I don't know. I need to sleep.
I need to close my eyes.

TOM
I'll stay with you, I promise.
Even if you can't see me.

He knows what he is saying and tears stream down his cheeks.

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FLORENCE
(eye closed - gripping hand)
I can feel you now Tom.

TOM
I'm frightened Mousie.

FLORENCE
Then you must be brave. We must both be brave.

As Mallory bursts in, Florence's pale body is spread on the floor. Tom has gone and Mallory struggles to revive her.

Maud's face has barely changed, but she is dead. Her eyes are still staring at Florence.

146 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING 146

The austere morning light seeps from the window across Florence's face as she looks out.

147 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY 147

Birds swoop through the air, resting in the branches of the oak trees. Pale light bounces off the calm lake and catches the heavy dew on the lawn.

148 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - DAY 148

First day back at school. Cars and families come and go. Parry is among them. Mallory is also there.

149 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 149

Florence is still at the window, dressed in trousers again; alone, beautiful and calm. Empty desks. A clean blackboard.

150 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 150

Kids dash around, worried mothers jostling them to and fro.

As Florence moves down the corridor, people pass her without looking at her or acknowledging her presence.

151 INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - DAY 151

PURSLOW is there chatting with two fathers as kids bustle past.

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PURSLOW
Solved the case in a heartbeat, found the hoax. Course the girl was not altogether well.

Florence is now in the hall, standing not far from Purslow.

PURSLOW (CONT'D)
I read a study last term that ladies' minds can't often cope with education, it can be too much for them. And she was the prettiest thing, don't mind admitting it. If Mrs Purslow wasn't Mrs Purslow... *

Purslow prattles on. No one has seen Florence leave.

152 EXT. ROOKWOOD SCHOOL - DAY (CONTINUED) 152

Florence emerges from the building, again boys pass her like she is not there. Mallory is watching a family saying goodbye to their youngster. Florence is behind his shoulder.

MALLORY
I know you're there.

FLORENCE
That's more than your headmaster does.

Florence slips her hand inside Mallory's. He turns to kiss her.

PURSLOW
Mr Mallory! Not in front of the boys. Heavens, the pair of you. Still, I don't suppose it does much harm.

Purslow walks them towards the avenue drive. As they walk...

PURSLOW (CONT'D)
I'd thought you'd left, Miss Cathcart. Robert tells me we shall be seeing more of you.

FLORENCE
And a bit less of him I hope.

PURSLOW
Well quite. He's a lucky chap, brainy lass like you.

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FLORENCE
That's terribly kind, Hugh. Some men have such anachronistic views on female education.

PURSLOW
Not me, old girl.
(walks back to school)
Some of my best friends are women.

Purslow is gone, taking the levity with him.

FLORENCE
My bags are at the station. I ought to (go)... I have to get used to calling my mother 'auntie'.

MALLORY
I can walk with you.

FLORENCE
(declining)
Till Saturday week.

They kiss, the passion of the kiss soon turned into a passionate plea; she breaks and holds Mallory's face firmly in her hands.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
We're lucky Robert. We've seen the ghosts of our past, we don't need to spend the rest of our days bullied by them.

Florence kisses him again before he can answer and walks off. She turns and walks backwards while speaking, deliberately resorting to levity on a matter both realise is serious. But Florence can do this now - the fire is back.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Now get back in there and tell those dead friends of yours - I'm your sweetheart. They behave themselves, or they'll answer to me.

Mallory watches her spin and go - confident and formidable - striding off, away from the house she grew up in. *

END CREDITS

'BE STILL MY SOUL' sung by the Bartle D'Arcy

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